the weekly Standard

JULY 5 / JULY 12, 2004 • $3.95

CLINTON, GORE, AND THE NEW YORK TIMES REWRITE HISTORY
STEPHEN F. HAYES • WILLIAM KRISTOL

Summer Reading

Fred Barnes on D-Day
Jon L. Breen on mysteries
Noemie Emery on Carter
Andrew Ferguson on Lincoln
Christopher Hitchens on Dylan

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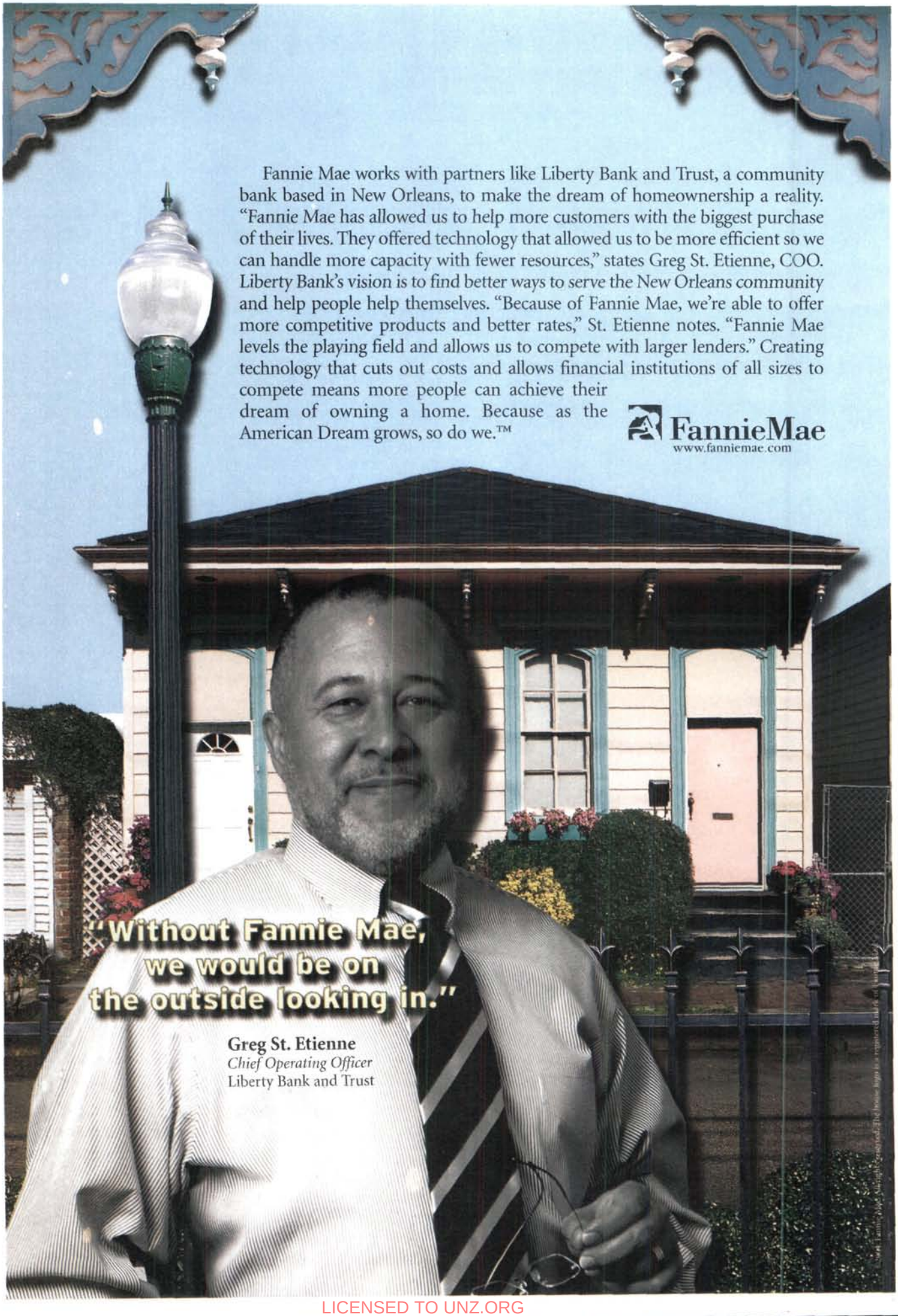

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THIS IS A COMBINED ISSUE. THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE WEEKLY STANDARD WILL APPEAR IN TWO WEEKS.

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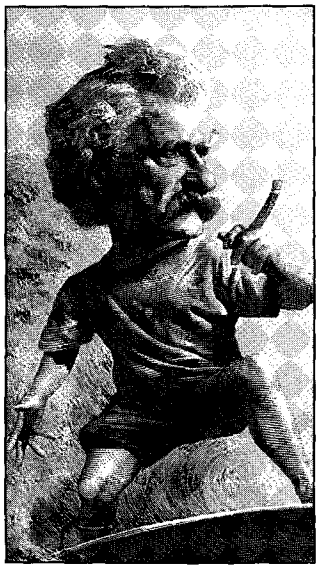

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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, the second week in July, the second week in August, and the second week in September) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Nicholas H.B. Swezey 1-202-496-3355. Midwest Advertising Sales: 1-312-953-7236. Copyright 2004, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

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The Clinton Autobiography: A User-Friendly Abridged Version

Chapter 1: Shreveport, Louisiana, 1943. Our future president's father, William Jefferson Blythe Jr., escorts "a date with some kind of medical emergency" into a hospital where our future president's mother is working as a nurse. While the other woman is rushed away for treatment, Blythe flirts with Mother and decides to dump his ailing girlfriend on the spot. Two months later, the new couple is married. Three years after that, William Jefferson Blythe III is born in Hope, Arkansas, "under a clear sky after a violent summer storm to a widowed mother"—the senior Blythe having meantime died in a freak auto accident. For the longest time, young Billy Blythe knows next to nothing about his father's life and character. Then, in 1993, the *Washington Post* reports that "my father had probably been married three times before he met Mother and apparently had at least two more children." The president later meets his half-brother. But, "for whatever reason," he never meets his half-sister.

Chapter 2: Until he's 4, the toddler is cared for largely by his maternal grandparents. Mother is often elsewhere, especially after she decides to seek training as a nurse-anaesthetist in New Orleans, which is then "an amazing place" with "over-the-top haunts like the Club My-Oh-My, where men in drag danced and sang as lovely ladies." In retrospect, Clinton figures "it wasn't a bad place for a beautiful young widow to move beyond her loss."

Chapter 3: Having "dated several men in New Orleans and had a fine time," Mother returns to Hope and marries Roger Clinton, the owner of the local Buick dealership and the man who supplies Papaw, Billy's grandfather, with the bootleg liquor they sell at the family grocery store. "Not long afterward, I started calling myself Billy Clinton," and entered a "new world" that "was exciting to me." For instance: Clinton humiliates himself by tripping over a nonmoving jump rope and breaking his leg. Also, his new "Daddy" has a bad drinking problem, and there are violent incidents at home that require the attention of the local constabulary. Suchlike experiences help mold Clinton's sense of self. "For cartoons, I preferred Bugs Bunny, Casper the Friendly Ghost, and Baby Huey, with whom I probably identified."

Chapter 4: On a whim, Daddy Clinton sells the Buick dealership and moves the family to a farm outside Hot Springs. There is no indoor toilet. "Later, when I got into politics, being able to say I had lived on a farm with an outhouse made a great story." But the farm grows tiresome quickly, and the Clintons soon relocate to a nice, big house downtown. Hot Springs in the 1950s has a little of everything, in just the right proportions. There is organized crime, for example, but only within strict limits: "The garages of two houses were bombed, but at a time when no one was home." And all kinds of law-abiding people live there, too. "The Jewish residents owned some of the best stores and ran the auction houses," Clinton remembers. All in all, he concludes—with the mastery of ambiguous sentence construction for which he is justly famous—"my friends and I led pretty normal lives, apart from the occasional calls to Maxine's bordello and the temptation to cut classes during racing season, which I never did."

Chapter 5: Clinton's brother, Roger Jr., is born in 1956. In 1957, "even though I wasn't yet 12," Clinton is forced to buy a full-price, adult ticket to a showing of *Bridge on the River Kwai*; he is so big, the cashier thinks he's lying about his age. "It was the first time in my life someone refused to take my word," which "hurt," of course, but also gave him valuable "preparation for life in Washington, where no one takes your word for anything." Entering junior high soon thereafter, Clinton recognizes "the first stirrings of sexual feelings toward girls." Alas, not everyone is attracted to him in return. It is around this time that Clinton has to "face the fact that I was not destined to be liked by everyone, usually for reasons I couldn't figure out."

Chapters 6 and 7: In fact, "I tended to make enemies effortlessly, just by being me, or, after I got into politics, because of the positions I took and the changes I tried to make." Mother, too, has a knack for making enemies, and she, too, unfairly suffers for it in her career—as when certain unspecified "problems with a couple of her operations" later derail her anaesthesiology practice. Whatever. "High school was a great ride." In the junior class play, Clinton performs a scene that involves kissing "a tall, attractive girl" named Cindy Arnold. Otherwise though, he isn't at this point doing "bad things"—nothing "beyond petting with girls," at any rate.

Chapter 8: John F. Kennedy is assassinated and Clinton overhears someone in the school band, "an attractive girl," remarking that she's sort of glad he's dead. "It was my first exposure . . . to the kind of hatred I would see a lot of in my political career, and that was forged into a powerful political movement in the last quarter of the twentieth century." For several months during his senior year, "I dated Susan Smithers, a girl from Benton, Arkansas." After graduation, "I went with Mauria Jackson to our senior party at the old Belvedere Club."

Chapter 9: In 1964, when Clinton

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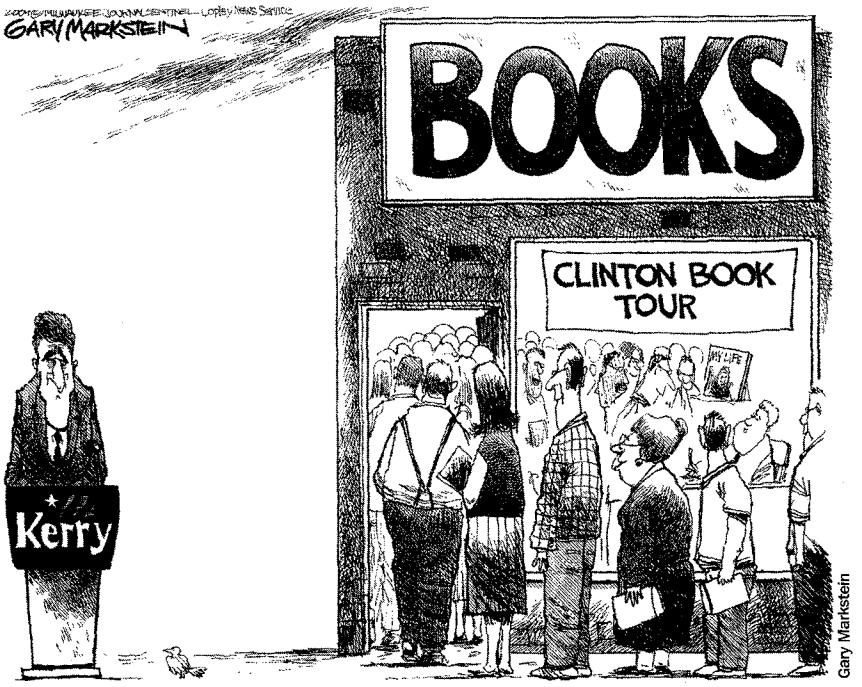

arrives at Georgetown University, "I could actually take a date to dinner for fourteen dollars, sometimes a movie too, though I had to let the girl order first to make sure our combined order plus a tip didn't go over my budget." Besides which, "in the first few months I didn't have a date every Saturday, so I was often a little ahead on my budget." When alone like this, Clinton often eats at the Hoya Carry Out. Rose, one of the proprietors, has "a nice face, and a great figure, which she showed off to good effect in tight sweaters, tighter pants, and spiked heels." On a freshman trip to New York with the Georgetown band, Clinton sees "my first streetwalker" and is both "tempted and terrified," though he does not have sexual relations with that woman. Later that year, he takes up with "my first long-term girlfriend," Denise Hyland, "a tall, freckle-faced Irish girl with kind beautiful eyes and an infectious smile."

Chapter 10: Clinton returns to Arkansas the summer after his sophomore year and does volunteer work for a Democratic gubernatorial candidate. One of the other volunteers is "Leslie Smith . . . a beautiful, smart girl from a powerful political family who had been Arkansas Junior Miss." The candidate's wife and two young daughters are active on the stump, and they're all "attractive," as well. "Somehow I was chosen" to be their chauffeur.

Chapters 11 and 12: Clinton reminisces about Arkansas senator J. William Fulbright. In the '50s, Fulbright had cosponsored the resolution censuring Joseph McCarthy, a move Clinton will admire more and more as time goes by—since McCarthy "would have been right at home in the crowd that took over the Congress in 1995." During his junior year at Georgetown, Clinton's part-time job as Fulbright's Capitol Hill messenger boy gives him a chance to peek at "material stamped 'confidential' and 'secret' that . . . showed clearly that our country was being misled about our progress" in Vietnam. Nevertheless, Clinton considers "dropping out of school and enlisting in the military" because "I didn't feel entitled to escape even a war I had come to oppose." Such diffidence about "the System" alienates him from some fellow students; Clinton is defeated in a run for president of the Georgetown student council. "Because of my good relations with the school administrators, my job and car, my orthodox campaign, and my glad-handing manner, I became the establishment candidate." Also, some of his friends are caught tearing down his principal opponent's posters. When summer arrives, Clinton attends a Ray Charles concert with "Carlene Jann, a striking girl" who has "long blond hair."

Chapter 13: Clinton wins a Rhodes Scholarship. "Applying in Arkansas was a big advantage." He favors Bobby Kennedy over Gene McCarthy in the 1968 presidential primaries, even though "I had begun dating a classmate who was volunteering at McCarthy's national headquarters in Washington." The relationship founders. "I was really crazy about her then and hated to be on her bad side, but I wanted to win and I wanted to elect a good man who would also be a good president." Later that summer, Clinton visits Mother's soon-to-be third husband, Jeff Dwire, in Louisiana (Roger Clinton has recently died). Dwire is an "unusual man"; he's still married to someone else, for one thing. But the two men bond while watching the Chicago Democratic convention on television.

Chapters 14 and 15: At the 1968 Miss America pageant, a group of female protesters "burned their bras," Clinton remembers. On his ocean liner cruise to England with that year's other Rhodes scholars, he notices "Martha Saxton, a brilliant, lovely, aspiring writer." At first, "she was spending most of her time with another" boy. "But eventually I got my chance." After arriving in Oxford, Clinton frets about possibly being drafted for military duty in Vietnam, reassured—as he will record in his diary—only by the "solace I have found in human companionship." He visits Paris with a woman named Alice Chamberlin, for example.

Chapter 16: Clinton returns to

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Arkansas and prepares for induction into the army, which involves a complicated series of perfectly innocent transactions, and if anybody says different he's a liar. During this period, "I spent most evenings and a lot of days with Betsey Reader, who had been a year ahead of me in school" and was "wise, wistful, and kind." Through another complicated series of innocent transactions, Clinton escapes the draft altogether. Back in Oxford, he again takes up with Martha Saxton. Then he visits Amsterdam "with my artist friend Aimée Gautier." In Amsterdam, "the famous red-light district featured perfectly legal prostitutes sitting on display in their windows," though he doesn't have sexual relations with those women, either. On a subsequent jaunt to Moscow, Clinton meets many interesting people, like the sister of a local cab-driver who "had a bit too much to drink and decided she wanted to stay with me." The woman's brother eventually "had to drag her out of the hotel into the snow."

Chapter 17: Clinton enrolls at Yale Law School. His personal life is a "mess." He has "broken up with a young woman who went home to marry her old boyfriend, then had a painful parting with a law student I liked very much but couldn't commit to." For a while, Nancy Bekavac "became a special friend of mine." But, basically, he remains adrift—until one day, "in Professor Emerson's class in Political and Civil Rights," he spots a woman who had "thick dark blond hair and wore eyeglasses and no makeup, but conveyed a sense of strength and self-possession," nevertheless. It was Hillary. Before long they are inseparable and move in together, though Hillary says no when Clinton first asks her to marry him.

Chapter 18: After Yale, Clinton takes a job at the University of Arkansas Law School in Fayetteville. He finds the work congenial and makes several lasting friends among his faculty colleagues. A man named Bob Leflar, for instance: One time they were playing a game of touch football, and Clinton was quarterback, and Leflar was being guarded by a 9-year-old boy. So Clinton called a play that Leflar executed perfectly: He "knocked the boy to the ground and ran left. He was wide open." Touchdown! The moral of the story being that Bob Leflar was a Democrat, and "if we had more like him, we'd win more often." Meanwhile, Clinton is engaged in intensive long-distance negotiations with Hillary about their future together. Both of them are uncertain what to do. Once, when Hillary visits Clinton in Fayetteville, it occurs to him that "her lovely but large head seemed to be too big for her body."

Chapters 19 and 20: In 1975, Clinton and the woman with the lovely but large head become man and wife. On a trip to Haiti, the newlyweds witness a voodoo ritual in which a woman "screamed repeatedly, then grabbed a live chicken and bit its head off." Things come into focus. "By the time we got back from Haiti, I had determined to run for attorney general" of Arkansas. He does so and wins. Two years later he wins his first race for governor.

Chapter 21: Clinton's first term is . . . difficult. He provokes statewide fury by signing a bill that sharply raises vehicle registration fees. President Carter decides to bivouac thousands of Cuban boatlift refugees at Arkansas's Fort Chaffee, and twice the Cubans burst out of the enclosure and riot. Later, a Titan II missile silo 40 miles from Little Rock explodes, catapulting a nuclear warhead into a nearby cow pasture. Not all the news is bad. In the summer of 1979, the Clintons decide to visit "a fertility expert in San Francisco" after a short vacation in Bermuda. But the Bermuda trip is "so wonderful we never made it to San Francisco." Which is to say, "soon after we got home, Hillary found out she was pregnant." Chelsea is born. Clinton loses his reelection bid, just the same.

Chapters 22 and 23: Clinton ponders the meaning of his defeat. At the end of 1981, he delivers a speech explaining his conclusions to the Florida state Democratic convention. Democrats shouldn't shrink from conflict with Republicans, he tells the delegates. Instead, they should "take a meat ax and cut their hands off." Armed with this insight, Clinton returns himself to the governor's mansion in 1982 after a "long, history-making campaign."

Chapters 24 and 25: In 1987, Clinton briefly considers a campaign for president but decides against it because he's not sure he's yet "lived long enough to acquire the wisdom and judgment necessary to be a good president." Nevertheless, he remains active in national politics. "In retrospect, my speeches in the late eighties seem interesting to me," though one such speech, Clinton's endless introduction of Mike Dukakis at the 1988 Democratic convention, is widely considered a disaster. Dukakis's aides are to blame. Two years later, Clinton wins reelection as governor and, having quickly accumulated the wisdom and judgment required to be a good president, immediately begins planning a run at the White House. Also, in an unrelated development, he becomes the first Arkansas governor in more than a quarter century to authorize an execution.

Chapters 26 through 28: Things are going great until January 23, 1992, when the Gennifer Flowers story breaks. Everything she and her right-wing sponsors claim is a lie, almost. Ditto for that silly business about the Vietnam-era draft. The election *should* have been about people like "Ronnie Machos, the little boy with a hole in his heart and no health insurance." Lesson: Republicans will stop at nothing in their attempts to keep such people miserable. Aiding the Republicans are the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, who do the right wing's bidding with stories on Whitewater and the Arkansas poultry industry. Also, at a debate just before the New York pri-

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mary, Clinton answers a question about marijuana by reporting that he has "experimented with the drug," but "didn't inhale." As a matter of fact, Clinton now points out, "I *couldn't* inhale—I tried but failed to inhale the marijuana smoke."

Chapters 29 through 31: Following his November victory, the president-elect holds a much publicized "economic summit" in Little Rock. "The atmosphere was electric, as if it were a rock concert for policy makers." There are other meetings, too, which Clinton describes at really, really fascinating length. On January 16, 1993, he leaves Littlåe Rock for Washington, a trip that reminds him of Abraham Lincoln's departure from Springfield in 1861. Clinton's Inaugural Address is similarly Lincoln-like, with "flashes of eloquence" that "challenged the American people to do more to help those in need and to heal our division." The Reconstruction agenda proves to be fraught with drama and controversy. The president receives an important haircut in Los Angeles, for example.

Chapters 32 through 35: In Russia, Boris Yeltsin is "up to his ears in alligators." In Washington, Presideånt Clinton becomes "addicted to Master Boggle and a gåame called UpWords," a Scrabble-like contest he plays "countless" times in the White House. On a serious note, Vince Foster is hounded to death by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Chapters 36 through 38: For a time, it appears that Clinton's first year in office will end well. By Thanksgiving, "I had a lot to be thankful for. My approval ratings were rising again, and American Airlines announced the settlement of its five-day-old strike." Alas, Whitewater reemerges as a bogus but constant political issue, and the mainstream media allow themselves to be infected by lurid Republican gossip about activities involving the president's trousers. No need to go into particulars: "If you want to know more," Clinton advises, you ought to read David Brock's "brave memoir" about the "extraordinary efforts made to discredit me by wealthy right-wingers with ties to Newt Gingrich and some adversaries of mine in Arkansas."

Chapters 39 through 45: A host of dragons gathers against the president, most notably Kenneth Starr, who accepts an "unprecedented" independent counsel appointment despite having a "real and blatant conflict of interest." Starr is joined by House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who represents the "self-righteous, condemning, Absolute-Truth-claiming dark side of white southern conservatism"—though "I didn't want to demonize Gingrich and his crowd as they had done to us." A woman named Susan Smith drowns her two young sons in October 1994, perhaps "because she had been sexually abused as a child by her ultra-conservative stepfather, who was on the board of his local chapter of the Christian Coalition." Men like this carry the Republican party to victories in that year's midterm congressional elections.

Chapters 46 and 47: Starr summons Hillary to the grand jury, a "cheap, sleazy publicity stunt." Because he has by this time pursued and victimized not just the Clintons but "many other innocent people," public opinion begins to turn, and finally, on April 17, 1996, "even the *New York Times* couldn't take it any longer." The *Times* calls on Starr to step down. A few months later, Clinton is reelected. At his second inauguration, "94-year-old Senator Strom Thurmond was seated next to Chelsea and told her, 'If I were seventy years younger, I'd court you.'" The president finds this charming.

Chapter 48: "What I had done with Monica Lewinsky was immoral and foolish. I was deeply ashamed of it and I didn't want it to come out." But, goshdarnit, Hillary "was right" about that "vast right-wing conspiracy"—"I was in a legal and political struggle with forces who had abused the criminal and civil laws and severely damaged innocent people in their attempt to destroy my presidency and cripple my ability to serve."

Chapter 49: "On Saturday morning, August 15, with the grand jury testimony looming and after a miserable, sleepless night, I woke up Hillary and told her the truth about what had happened between me and Monica Lewinsky." For quite some time thereafter, Clinton "slept on the couch." Only gradually, and with benefit of intensive family counseling, does the president come to understand how the 1995 budget battle and government shutdown had practically forced him into Ms. Lewinsky's arms. "When I was exhausted, angry, or feeling isolated and alone," it turns out, "I was more vulnerable to making selfish and self-destructive personal mistakes about which I would later be ashamed."

Chapters 50 through 52: Clinton is impeached by the House of Representatives and, anticlimactically, acquitted by the Senate. The impeachment battle is "my last great showdown with the forces I had opposed all of my life—those who had defended the old order of racial discrimination and segregation in the South and played on the insecurities and fears of the white working class in which I grew up."

Chapters 53 through 55: Clinton's seventh year in office is "full of achievement," yadda, yadda, yadda. The 2000 presidential contest gets underway. The Republicans nominate George W. Bush after he edges out John McCain in the pivotal South Carolina primary ("aided by a telephone campaign into conservative white households reminding them that Senator McCain had a 'black baby'"). Democratic nominee Al Gore makes history by choosing a "Jewish-American" to be his running mate. But the Supreme Court issues an "appalling decision"—right up there with *Dred Scott* and *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*—awarding the race to Bush. What are you gonna do? "The river of time carries us all away. All we have is the moment." ♦

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Casual

All in the Family

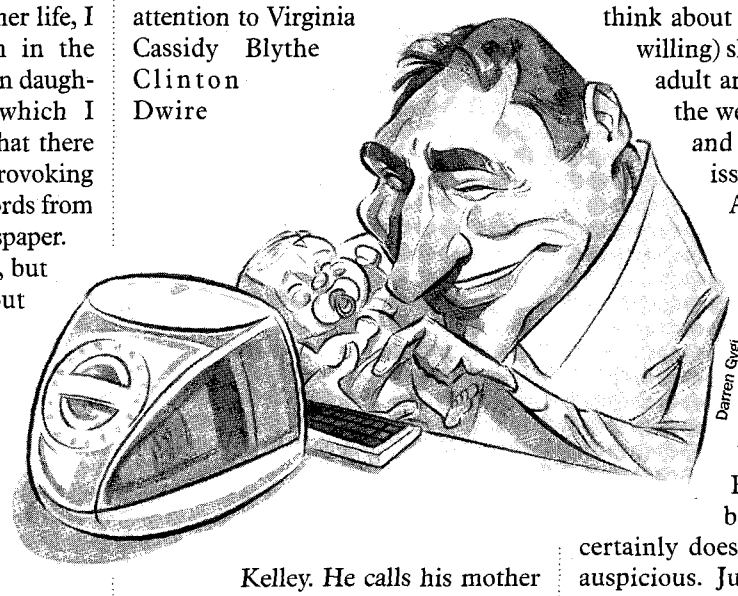
During my months as an expectant father, I declared I would do things differently from other writers once my baby was born. I would not exploit her existence for cheap copy. I would not objectify her by writing about her. I would not make use of fatherhood to score easy emotional points in articles.

I showed Herculean dedication to my stated goal . . . for six whole days. On the seventh day of her life, I wrote a newspaper column in the form of a letter to my newborn daughter. It made people cry, which I attribute to the simple fact that there can be nothing easier than provoking tears by publishing loving words from a father to an infant in a newspaper.

Was I ignoble? I hope not, but I can't be sure. Writing about personal matters is an authorial minefield. It's safer not to, but the temptation is very great because the reward can be substantial. You have a wonderful opportunity to write something that really touches and reaches people because you are speaking directly about experiences that everybody goes through. On the other hand, you must also face the fact that you could mortally embarrass yourself, the loved ones you write about, and the ideas you care most about. Tone is everything here. Make a mistake in tone, and you reap the whirlwind.

Exhibit A: Bill Clinton's *My Life*. Its opening sections are full of folksy stuff about Aunt Ollie and Mammaw and Papaw, told in a prose that seems to drawl the way Clinton drawls when he's trying to be a Man of the People. (If you want to read a long passage about what Aunt Ollie served for lunch on Saturdays, turn to pages 14 and 15.) There are people who will lap this stuff up, and I don't doubt that in 40 years a future president of the United States will say he learned all he needed to know about politics by reading his first edition of *My Life* back in high school in 2004.

But in his tributes to his mother, Bill gets—how shall I say this?—a little creepy. Even that young future president may find himself squirming when Bill turns his attention to Virginia Cassidy Blythe Clinton Dwire Kelley. He calls his mother "beautiful" on at least 10 separate occasions, but he uses the word in a way that doesn't quite sound like a son talking about his mother. It all builds up to this interesting and discomfiting passage:



> When I could get up early enough, I loved sitting on the floor of the bathroom and watching her put makeup on that beautiful face. Until I was eleven or twelve, she had long dark wavy hair. It was really thick and beautiful, and I liked watching her brush it until it was just so. I'll never forget the day she came home from the beauty shop with short hair, all her beautiful waves gone. It was not long after my first dog, Susie, had to be put to sleep at age nine, and it hurt almost as badly. . . .

This, I think, is a good example of how not to write about loved ones, even in an autobiography. Of course, Bill Clinton is unembarrassable, his wife is incomprehensible, and his mother left this vale 10 years ago, so they're probably all beyond suffering the agonies of words that are a bit too revelatory for most readers.

I don't know whether I'll write about my daughter in the future. My vow not to do so was one of those pledges made in attitudinizing ignorance of what the actual experience of having a child would be like—and the way it would change my perspective even after only six days. She made me think about perspective, how (God willing) she would one day be an adult and might look back on the week when she was born and wonder at the strange issues that consumed America's attention. The Laci Peterson murder? Madonna's kabbalistic children's book? Even the 9/11 Commission?

As for me, I was born on the day the Bay of Pigs invasion began and ended, which certainly doesn't sound particularly auspicious. Just before my mother went into labor, my parents had dinner with the parents of one of the editors of this magazine and they all got into a vicious political argument. This clearly presaged my entry into the contentious world of argumentative intellection.

I found out about that only recently, just after my daughter's birth. My parents never wrote a word about my arrival into the world, but my father tells me he spent his time in the waiting room writing an article on telegram slips. My mother couldn't write anything that night, because she was otherwise engaged.

John Podhoretz

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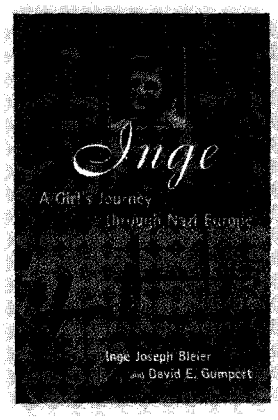

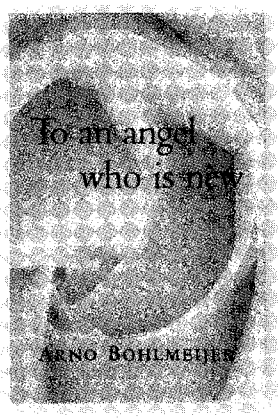

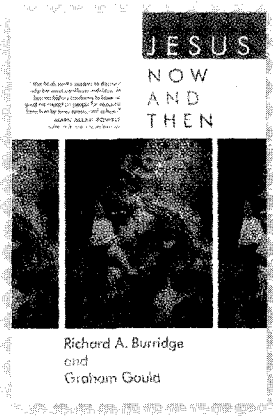

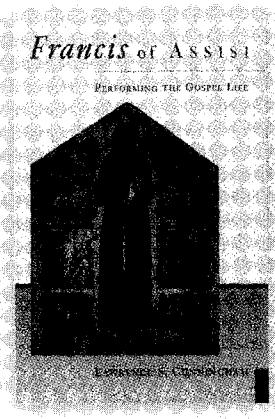

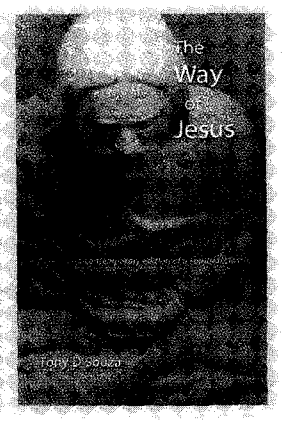

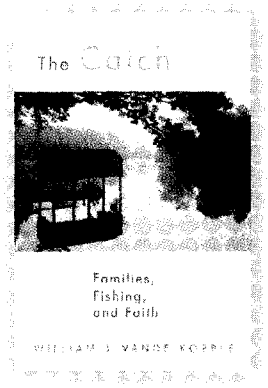

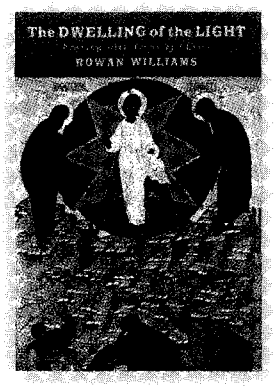

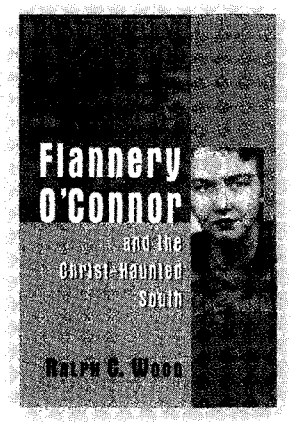

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Correspondence

Flack Jacket

I am a little puzzled at why Jack Shafer so fervidly insists that I was of no help to him in his thinking about the *New York Times*'s irresponsible coverage of Augusta National Golf Club (Correspondence, June 21).

Bob Kohn wrote in "Bad *Times*" (May 24) that I had "steered information and planted ideas" with various critics, including Shafer. Well, that's exactly right. On December 5, 2002, for instance, I sent a lengthy note to Shafer detailing how the *Times* had preordained a story angle that was at odds with demonstrable facts, had distorted quotes, and ignored a primary source who said she was wronged by the paper. Shafer replied, "I'd be happy to hear the [source's] complaints about the *Times*'s treatment of her . . ." and indeed he and I followed up with a phone call. A few days later, Shafer wrote me again to twice thank me and point out that another online critic had already begun using the information I was disseminating. Actually, three others had used the material by then. So, was Shafer uninterested or was he beat out of the starting gate by others?

In any event, more indication that I was having an impact came in still another note Shafer wrote me about a month later in which he said, "I think the bloggers have presented your case pretty well, don't you?" Um, yes, Jack, I do. In a column he subsequently wrote, Shafer credited me as "Augusta National's aggressive PR maven."

The fact is that some critics were wholly receptive to my suggestions, others mildly interested, and some didn't respond at all. But I was indeed circulating original material and ideas, exclusive sources, supporting background—all demonstrating or reiterating how substandard and ethically reckless the *Times*'s coverage was.

Jim McCarthy
Washington, DC

Radio Personality

I loved reading Andrew Ferguson's story about the demise of classical music on NPR ("Radio Silence," June 14), but was sorry to get confirmation of a trend I have noticed in recent years. Disappointed, though not surprised, because I have seen that audiences at symphony concerts, legitimate theaters, and operas have predominantly gray, white, and bald heads. Symphony orchestras have already folded in a number of cities. The long-term future for classical entertainment looks bleak.

There is another reason, I strongly suspect, that music has been replaced by news and talk on NPR. Based on years of listening to NPR's *Morning Edition*, where the news reported and persons interviewed are almost always left-leaning, my conclusion is that NPR is doing its best to serve as an antidote to AM talk radio.

Bruce Tennant
Hilton Head, SC

Coalition of the Willing

In Noemie Emery's "The Kerry-McCain Fantasy" (May 31), Emery marshals a comprehensive array of reasons why a John Kerry-John McCain ticket would be a mismatch that Democrats would quicky come to rue. But Emery's whole edifice tips over if Kerry says to his fellow senator: "John, please understand, I am not asking you to switch parties, nor do I really want you to do so."

Under those circumstances, the team of Kerry, the Democrat from Massachusetts, and McCain, the Republican from Arizona, could be hyped less as a "ticket" than as a "coalition," something akin to the war cabinet David Lloyd George formed in December 1916, when Great Britain's fortunes were at their lowest ebb. Link that world emergency to the current one, and the Democrats would be well positioned to make a compelling case for unseating President Bush.

Robert G. Wyeth
Homestead, PA

S-Mart Set

In "Stonewalls and Wal-Mart" (June 14), Geoffrey Norman worries about Wal-Mart's expansion plans in Vermont and states, "The kind of commerce that Wal-Mart represents will change the state, no getting around that. The small business will go the way of the small farm."

Curious at this claim, I checked out some data on the website of the Small Business Administration for states where Wal-Mart opened stores more recently. The data show that Geoffrey Norman's fears about small businesses disappearing have no basis in fact.

In the mid-1990s, Wal-Mart opened stores in Alaska, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Washington, and Vermont. In every one of those states, one finds the number of small businesses increased from 1997 to 2002, and the number of people employed by small businesses rose from 1996 to 2000 (the most recent years for which data are available).

Wal-Mart has replaced Microsoft as the new target of those questioning the efficacy of free market capitalism. However, the next time one reads about the harm caused by the entry of Wal-Mart or any new player into a market, check if the data support the claim.

Stuart Anderson
Washington, DC

Legacy Admission

Make fun of Grover all you want (Parody, June 21), but "those in the know" know that each time they fly into Washington, D.C., they're really landing at Reagan-Norquist.

Wlady Pleszczynski
Annandale, VA

• • •

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Good *Times*, Bad *Times*

Here is the *New York Times*, editorializing in high dudgeon on June 17:

> Now President Bush should apologize to the American people. . . . Of all the ways Mr. Bush persuaded Americans to back the invasion of Iraq last year, the most plainly dishonest was his effort to link his war of choice with the battle against terrorists worldwide. . . . Mr. Bush and his top advisers . . . should have known all along that there was no link between Iraq and Al Qaeda.

Here are excerpts from a front-page article by Thom Shanker in the *New York Times* one week later, on June 25:

> Contacts between Iraqi intelligence agents and Osama bin Laden when he was in Sudan in the mid-1990s were part of a broad effort by Baghdad to work with organizations opposing the Saudi ruling family, according to a newly disclosed document obtained by the Americans in Iraq. . . .
>
> The new document, which appears to have circulated only since April, was provided to the *New York Times* several weeks ago. . . .
>
> A translation of the new Iraqi document was reviewed by a Pentagon working group in the spring . . .
>
> The task force concluded that the document "appeared authentic," and that it "corroborates and expands on previous reporting" about contacts between Iraqi intelligence and Mr. bin Laden in Sudan, according to the task force's analysis. . . .
>
> The document, which asserts that Mr. bin Laden "was approached by our side," states that Mr. bin Laden previously "had some reservations about being labeled an Iraqi operative," but was now willing to meet in Sudan, and that "presidential approval" was granted to the Iraqi security service to proceed. . . .
>
> The document is of interest to American officials as a detailed, if limited, snapshot of communications between Iraqi intelligence and Mr. bin Laden, but this view ends with Mr. bin Laden's departure from Sudan. At that point, Iraqi intelligence officers began "seeking other channels through which to handle the relationship, in light of his current location," the document states.
>
> Members of the Pentagon task force that reviewed the document said it described no formal alliance being reached between Mr. bin Laden and Iraqi intelligence. The Iraqi document itself states that "co-operation between the two organizations should be allowed to develop freely through discussion and agreement." . . .
>
> The Iraqi document states that Mr. bin Laden's organization in Sudan was called "The Advice and Reform Commission." The Iraqis were cued to make their approach to Mr. bin Laden in 1994 after a Sudanese official visited Uday Hussein, the leader's son, as well as the director of Iraqi intelligence, and indicated that Mr. bin Laden was willing to meet in Sudan.
>
> A former director of operations for Iraqi intelligence Directorate 4 met with Mr. bin Laden on Feb. 19, 1995, the document states.

So much for "no link between Iraq and al Qaeda." So much for the claim of the *Times* editorial, and of its page-one headline the same day mischaracterizing the 9/11 Commission staff report. We look forward to the editors' apology.

More important, we look forward to the Bush administration seriously and relentlessly engaging the debate over the Saddam-al Qaeda terror connection. We hope we do not wait in vain.

Vice President Cheney did sally forth last week, the day after the release of the 9/11 Commission staff report. But he hasn't much followed up since then, and others have been mostly silent. Does the Bush team really think it can command majority support for the war in Iraq if it allows its opponents an uncontested field to make the case that Saddam had no significant links to terrorists?

After all, the situation on the ground in Iraq is likely to remain ambiguous over the next few months. So simply depending on things to turn out well after the June 30 turnover of power is, to say the least, politically risky. Large caches of weapons of mass destruction are unlikely to turn up soon. This does not mean Saddam's history of concealing his weapons programs from inspectors was not a solid ground for his removal. But it does mean that the WMD issue is not a likely winner for the administration.

The terror link issue, by contrast, should be a clear winner. Saddam and Osama had a "relationship" in the past, and sought continuing "cooperation" between their two "organizations." Could the president of the United States have simply left Saddam in power, with sanctions coming off, reconstituting his weapons programs, confident that Saddam and al Qaeda would not work together again in the future? Would this have been a reasonable course of action?

This is a genuinely important debate for the country to have in this election year. It is a good debate for the Bush administration—if it has the wit and the nerve to engage it.

—*William Kristol*

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Un-Moored from Reality

Fahrenheit 9/11 connects dots that aren't there.

BY MATT LABASH

CONSIDERING THAT I'm writing this from inside the bunker of what many regard as the Alliance of Neocon Warmongers, it bears mentioning that Michael Moore and I have one surprising trait in common: We both believe that the war in Iraq was ill-advised, ill-planned, and ill-executed, an apparent failure bordering on unmitigated disaster, that was never in our best national interest. Around our office over the last two years, I've made these arguments to colleagues, open-minded types who, after they put me through my waterboarding/naked pyramid sessions, say they'll take it under advisement. And I make the disclosure now so that readers will not be confused. I do not trash *Fahrenheit 9/11* because it's a piece of antiwar propaganda. I trash *Fahrenheit 9/11* because it's an offal-laden piece of junk.

It is proof, as if we need more, that Moore doesn't make art, he makes fudge. Since fact-checking his work has become a near full-time cottage industry, it is worth remembering that in his debut film *Roger & Me*, his indictment of heartless General Motors, he was caught fudging evictions, showing people getting bounced onto the street who'd never been GM workers. In 2002's antigun screed, *Bowling for Columbine*, he fudged his tear-jerking closer. While hectoring Alzheimer's-ravaged NRA mascot Charlton Heston, he related the heart-tugging tale of a mother whose 6-year-old son, largely unsupervised because of oppressive welfare-to-work laws, found a gun in her house and killed one of his classmates. Moore failed to mention that the family member Mom entrusted him to was running a crackhouse out of her home, that the gun had been left on a mattress, and that she'd admitted beating another son while sitting on him after duct-taping his hands, feet, and mouth. Not exactly a model of responsible parenting, gun ownership, or filmmaking.

As has become my custom at Moore screenings, I began by scratching hash marks in my notebook, counting his conspiracy theories. Not only does this train the mind, but it distracts me from laughing inappropriately and disturbing fellow filmgoers. But in *Fahrenheit 9/11*, I quickly abandoned counting for cackling. By the time the opening credits rolled, Moore had already explained how George W. Bush rigged the 2000 election by stealing votes from black people, as well as fallen back on his shopworn class-war claptrap to imply that Bush was out of touch with the common folk, since on September 10, 2001, he "went to sleep that night in a bed made with fine French linens." (The next day's terror victims doubtless slept on burlap.)

The intro credits are accompanied by creepy acoustic guitar runs—third-world atrocity music—which play under a montage of our leaders/war criminals sinisterly readying themselves for television appearances. There's Dick Cheney getting his rake-over fluffed. There's Tom Ridge diabolically laughing. There's Paul Wolfowitz smoothing a cowlick with spittle. They smile. They have make-up applied before going on TV. Bastards!

From there, Moore offers a full hour's worth of Bush-centric conspiracies so seemingly random, disjointed, and pointless that one's ticket stub should come with a flow-chart and a decoder ring. In my line of work, when you hear this strain of rhetoric, it's usually from a man in a sandwich board touting the apocalypse or Mumia's innocence, pushing stacks of literature at you while standing on the wrong side of a police cordon. It doesn't typically come from someone whose premiere is attended by half of respectable Democratic Washington, and whose film won the coveted Palme d'Or prize at Cannes.

Moore never passes up a chance to make Bush look like a lightweight, smirking chimp. In fairness, Bush provides more than enough source material. There's Bush, to the strains of the Go-Go's "Vacation," casting fishing lines and speeding away in golf carts, with Moore informing us that the president spent 42 percent of his first eight months in office on vacation. There's Bush in a grade school classroom photo op, sitting shifty-eyed and paralyzed for a full seven minutes after being told the second plane smacked into the World Trade Center, while a teacher reads *My Pet Goat*. (As a friend of mine says, "Maybe he just wanted to see how it ended.")

Moore uses Bush's momentary inaction as a device to ask what he was thinking, which, to paraphrase Moore's answer, was how to cover his tracks. This allows us passage into the paranoid labyrinth of Moore's mind, which is illustrated by news footage and a string of experts (Moore spends less time physically on screen than in any of his other films, a fact which recommends it, comparatively speaking). He never fabricates out of whole cloth. Rather, Moore the filmmaker takes a perfectly reasonable proposition (our government generally, and the Bush family specifically, have been too solicitous of the Saudis), while Moore the fudgemaker throws entire trays at the wall, never overtly making allegations that amount to anything, but crossing his fingers that some of it sticks.

Matt Labash is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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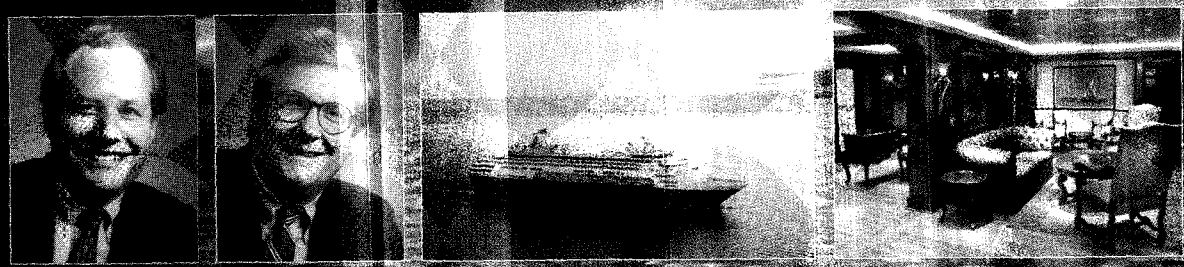

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Miramax's Harvey Weinstein confers with Fahrenheit 9/11 *director Michael Moore*

The insinuation is that Bush had to keep us scared, with color-coded alerts and a citizen-terrorizing Patriot Act, to distract the country from his tangle of conflicts of interests and to build sentiment for invading Iraq. Moore mentions that the Taliban visited Texas while Bush was governor, over a possible pipeline deal with Unocal. But Moore doesn't say that they never actually met with Bush or that the deal went bust in 1998 and had been supported by the Clinton administration.

Moore mentions that Bush's old National Guard buddy and personal friend James Bath had become the money manager for the bin Laden family, saying, "James Bath himself in turn invested in George W. Bush." The implication is that Bath invested the bin Laden family's money in Bush's failed energy company, Arbusto. He doesn't mention that Bath has said that he had invested his own money, not the bin Ladens', in Bush's company.

The family members who had disowned Osama were mainstays of American business, to the point that they were members of the nefarious Carlyle Group, a fact Moore naturally mentions, along with the fact that George's daddy was a member, too. One of the Carlyle Group's investments was United Defense, maker of Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Moore says September 11 "guaranteed that United Defense was going to have a very good year." See it all coming together? Moore tells us that when Carlyle took United Defense public, they made a one-day profit of $237 million, but under all the public scrutiny, the bin Laden family eventually had to withdraw (Moore doesn't tell us that they withdrew before the public offering, not after it).

At their own request, the bin Laden family was quickly shuttled away after 9/11, back to Saudi Arabia. Moore finds it suspicious, as well he should. Who would be stupid enough to let that happen, without working them over for a good couple of weeks? Actually, according to a May interview he gave to *The Hill*, it was Richard Clarke, Bush's former counterterrorism adviser and the new patron saint of Bush-bashers. Moore makes use of him in the film, though he manages not to mention Clarke's role in the departure of the bin Ladens.

Here, if we're going to play connect-the-dots, a few questions are in order. For starters, are we really supposed to believe that 9/11 and the ensuing wars were a collaborative profiteering scheme between the bin Ladens, the Bushes, and defense contractors? Furthermore, will Moore's DVD director's cut elucidate Bush ties to the Illuminati, the Trilateral Commission, and the Freemasons? Who knows? Who cares? Moore doesn't seem to, as he speedily moves on, making another tray of fudge.

When Moore takes us to Iraq, on the eve of war, he shows placid scenes of an untroubled land on the brink of imperial annihilation. With all the leisurely strolling and kite-flying, it is unclear if Iraqis are living under a murderous dictatorship or in a Valtrex commercial. In Moore's telling of the invasion, the shock-and-awe is less high-value-target/smart-bombing, more Dresden/Hiroshima. According to the footage that ensues, our pilots seem to have hit nothing but women and children. If Moore's documentarian gig were to fall through, he could easily seek employment as an Al Jazeera cameraman.

This is, it nearly goes without saying, his downfall as a storyteller. In his unctuous morality tales, everyone is assigned black and white hats. The white hats mainly belong to the oppressed people of Iraq, subject to our soldiers' midnight raids under the jackboot of occupation, and to other victims of the administration, such as the poor, underemployed people of Flint, Michigan (Moore's obsessively referenced hometown), who serve as helpless recruiting chum for Bush's killing machine.

The black hats (administration types) seem to be motivated solely by world domination and the desire to steer no-bid contracts to Halliburton. There is no allowance for moral ambiguity, or what would've been even more interesting, misguided moral clarity—the possibility that Bush made a bad judgment call, but did so for the right reasons (security concerns, the elimination of a brutal despot, and the liberation of his people).

One of this film's only pure moments occurs when Moore spends

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time with the mother of an American soldier who died in Karbala. The mother is a conservative Democrat from a family with a long military history. She used to rage at war protestors, but since losing her son, she seethes at the administration who sent him to his death, crying almost animally, "I want him to be alive . . . and I can't make him alive." (But even this is sullied by Moore's smarmy, gratuitous insistence to her that "yeah, it's a great country," an obvious inoculation against charges that he hates America.)

Critics have accused Moore of milking her grief until it moos. But on this, he deserves a pass. Anyone wishing to discuss war, either for or against, should also be prepared to seriously consider its tolls, especially the human ones. Moore being Moore, however, steps on his most effective material by following it with yet another cheap stunt: ambushing congressmen to ask if they will enlist their children to go to Iraq, as if anyone can. He finds no takers, then says he can't blame them, since who would want to give up their child? Nobody, of course. Not the parents of soldiers in Iraq, nor the parents of those who died at Normandy. But few would argue that World War II wasn't a war worth fighting.

Which is not to say Iraq is in the same class. And it is why real questions should be continuously asked, and skepticism applied. The kind of skepticism that forces leaders to account for whether they've taken the right course of action. Not the crank, grab bag of stitched-together conspiracies that encourages Moore's political opponents to be reflexively dismissive—and causes the leftish reviewer sitting next to me to say, "He infuriates me because he makes my arguments badly."

There is plenty of grist for skeptics of the war to argue that the chances of a shiny, happy democracy's flowering in Iraq reside somewhere between slim and nil. But those are still better odds than the ones on Moore's someday making an intellectually honest film. ♦

Bill Clinton Was Right

. . . about the connection between Saddam and al Qaeda.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, in the introduction to an hour-long PBS documentary called *Saddam's Ultimate Solution*, former Clinton State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said:

> Tonight, we examine the nature of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Ten years after the Gulf War and Saddam is still there and still continues to stockpile weapons of mass destruction. Now there are suggestions he is working with al Qaeda, which means the very terrorists who attacked the United States last September may now have access to chemical and biological weapons.

The documentary, broadcast on July 11, 2002, laid out in exhaustive detail alleged Iraqi connections with al Qaeda. Rubin noted in his introduction that the report contained "disturbing allegations, some of which are hard to prove." But, he added, such allegations "are important enough to be fully explored and investigated."

Last week, appearing on a cable talk show as a senior adviser to the presidential campaign of John Kerry, Rubin sharply criticized the public official who has most forcefully asserted that these allegations need to be fully explored and investigated. Rubin went so far as to question Vice President Dick Cheney's "fitness for office." Rubin, asked about the documentary, then distanced himself from the film. "Was I the producer of the documentary?" he asked. "I was the host, producing—having a discussion about the documentary."

Fair enough. Rubin is right that as host he is not necessarily responsible for everything in the hour-long program. Among the claims made by investigative filmmaker Gwynne Roberts was this one: "My investigation reveals much more—namely evidence of terrorist training camps in Iraq and testimony that al Qaeda fighters have been trained to use poison gas." But on the PBS program, Rubin spoke in a manner that suggested he did, in fact, believe the evidence presented by Roberts, pressing one interview subject about the possibility of Saddam's passing weapons of mass destruction to "the al Qaeda people in the film he's already trained."

Meanwhile, the men at the top of the administration Rubin worked for—Bill Clinton and Al Gore—have come down with an even more striking case of political amnesia.

On June 24, Katie Couric interviewed President Clinton on NBC's *Today Show*. She asked, "What do you think about this connection that Cheney, that Vice President Cheney continues to assert between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda?" Clinton pleaded total ignorance. "All I can tell you is I never saw it, I never believed it based on the evidence I have."

The same day, former Vice President Al Gore went much further in a vitriolic speech at Georgetown University law school. "President Bush is now intentionally misleading the American people by continuing to aggressively and brazenly assert a linkage between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. If he is not lying, if he genuinely believes that, that makes them unfit in battle against al Qaeda. If they believe these flimsy scraps, then who would want them in charge? Are they too dishonest or too gullible? Take your pick."

Gore also distorted the significance of the recent 9/11 Commission staff

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD *and the author of* The Connection: How al Qaeda's Collaboration with Saddam Hussein Has Endangered America *(HarperCollins).*

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statement. He called the statement an "extensive independent investigation by the bipartisan" 9/11 Commission that found "there was no meaningful relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda of any kind." In fact, three 9/11 Commission sources tell THE WEEKLY STANDARD that the one paragraph of the staff statement about the relationship was not intended to be a definitive pronouncement on the issue. In any case, "no meaningful relationship" was never the view of the Clinton/Gore administration.

On February 17, 1998, President Clinton, speaking at the Pentagon, warned of the "reckless acts of outlaw nations and an unholy axis of terrorists, drug traffickers, and organized international criminals." These "predators of the twenty-first century," he said, these enemies of America, "will be all the more lethal if we allow them to build arsenals of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and missiles to deliver them. We simply cannot allow that to happen. There is no more clear example of this threat than Saddam Hussein's Iraq."

Later that spring, the Clinton Justice Department prepared an indictment of Osama bin Laden. The relevant passage, prominently placed in the fourth paragraph, reads:

> Al Qaeda reached an understanding with the government of Iraq that al Qaeda would not work against that government and that on particular projects, specifically including weapons development, al Qaeda would work cooperatively with the government of Iraq.

Patrick Fitzgerald, a U.S. attorney involved in the preparation of the indictment, testified before the 9/11 Commission. He said the intelligence behind that assertion came from Jamal al Fadl, a former high-ranking al Qaeda terrorist who before the 9/11 attacks gave the U.S. intelligence community its first intimate look at al Qaeda. According to Fitzgerald, al Fadl told his interrogators that bin Laden associate Mamdouh Mahmud Salim (Abu Hajer al Iraqi) "tried to reach a sort of agreement where they wouldn't work against each other—sort of the enemy of my enemy is my friend—and that there were indications that within Sudan when al Qaeda was there, which al Qaeda left in the summer of '96, or the spring of '96, there were efforts to work on jointly acquiring weapons."

Several months later, after al Qaeda bombed two American embassies in East Africa, numerous Clinton officials cited an Iraq-al Qaeda connection to justify retaliatory strikes against the al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan.

On August 24, 1998, the Clinton administration made available a "senior intelligence official" who cited "strong ties between the plant and Iraq." The following day, Thomas Pickering, undersecretary of state for political affairs and one of a handful of Clinton officials involved in the decision to strike al Shifa, briefed foreign reporters at the National Press Club. He was asked directly whether he knew "of any connection between the so-called pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum and the Iraqi government in regard to production of precursors of VX" nerve gas.

> Yeah, I would like to consult my notes just to be sure that what I have to say is stated clearly and correctly. We see evidence that we think is quite clear on contacts between Sudan and Iraq. In fact, al Shifa officials, early in the company's history, we believe were in touch with Iraqi individuals associated with Iraq's VX program.

Five days after that, U.N. ambassador Bill Richardson appeared on CNN and pointed to "direct evidence of ties between Osama bin Laden" and Sudan's Military Industrial Corporation. "You combine that with Sudan's support for terrorism, their connections with Iraq on VX, and you combine that, also, with the chemical precursor issue, and Sudan's leadership's support for Osama bin Laden, and you've got a pretty clear-cut case."

Sandy Berger, then Clinton's national security adviser and now a top adviser to the Kerry campaign, made the connection in an October 16, 1998, op-ed in the *Washington Times*. "To not have acted against this facility would have been the height of irresponsibility," he argued. The Clinton administration had "information linking bin Laden to the Sudanese regime and to the al Shifa plant."

Berger explained that al Shifa was a dual-use facility. "We had physical evidence indicating that al Shifa was the site of chemical weapons activity," Berger wrote. "Other products were made at al Shifa. But we have seen such dual-use plants before—in Iraq. And, indeed, we have information that Iraq has assisted chemical weapons activity in Sudan."

Richard Clarke, a former counterterrorism official under both Clinton and Bush, confirmed this to the *Washington Post* on January 23, 1999. Clarke said the U.S. government was "sure" Iraq was behind the VX precursor produced at the factory. The story continued, "Clarke said U.S. intelligence does not know how much of the substance was produced at al Shifa or what happened to it. But he said that intelligence exists linking bin Laden to al Shifa's current and past operators, the Iraqi nerve gas experts, and the National Islamic Front in Sudan."

More recently, former Clinton defense secretary William Cohen affirmed the Baghdad-Khartoum connection in testimony before the 9/11 Commission on March 23, 2004. Cohen told the panel that an executive from al Shifa had "traveled to Baghdad to meet with the father of the VX program."

Many of these same officials now disclaim any knowledge of an Iraq-al Qaeda relationship. Daniel Benjamin, a top counterterrorism official on Clinton's National Security Council, makes the strongest case that the intelligence did not establish a direct Iraq-al Qaeda connection. Benjamin points out that the Iraqis may not have known the chemical weapons technology they provided to the Sudanese Military Industrial Corporation would end up in the hands of al Qaeda, and al Qaeda may not have known the assistance it was receiving came from Iraq.

But now the *New York Times*—a newspaper previously dismissive of the Iraq-al Qaeda connection—has reported the contents of an Iraqi Intelligence document that discusses the Iraq-bin Laden

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"relationship" and plans for bin Laden to work with Iraq against the ruling family in Saudi Arabia. The document states that "cooperation between the two organizations should be allowed to develop freely through discussion and agreement." The Iraqi document, which refers to the period of the first Clinton term, has been "authenticated by the U.S. government," according to the front-page story in Friday's *Times*.

Taken together with other evidence of the close relationship between al Qaeda and the Sudanese government, the information in the *Times* article makes it less likely that Iraq and al Qaeda were unwitting allies. The *Times* reported that a representative of the Sudanese government approached the Iraqis at bin Laden's behest: "The Iraqis were cued to make their approach to Mr. bin Laden after a Sudanese official visited Uday Hussein, the leader's son, as well as the director of Iraqi Intelligence, and indicated that Mr. bin Laden was willing to meet in Sudan."

Virtually no one disputes the significant overlap between the government in Sudan and al Qaeda. As Clinton said last week in an interview on CBS: "Mr. [Hassan] al-Turabi, the head of the Sudanese government, was a buddy of bin Laden's. They were business partners together."

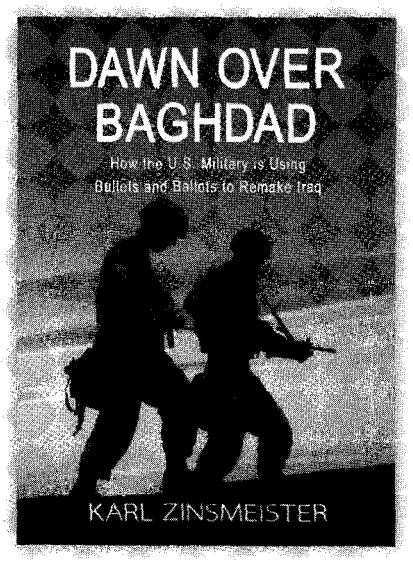
According to al Fadl, the close associate of bin Laden who has cooperated with the U.S. government since 1996, bin Laden himself said his businesses were run in support of Khartoum. Al Fadl, testifying at the trial of al Qaeda terrorists who plotted the 1998 embassy bombings, recalled in broken English a 1992 conversation he had with bin Laden. "He say our agenda is bigger than business. We not going to make business here, but we need to help the government and the government help our group, and this is our purpose."

Al Fadl and other high-level al Qaeda detainees have described the group's relationship with Sudan in detail. The relationship included: al Qaeda terrorists assigned by the Sudanese government to assassinate political opponents; al Qaeda's providing communications equipment and arms —"Kalashnikovs"—on behalf of Defaa al Shabi, a division of the Sudanese Army fighting Christians in southern Sudan; training exchanges between Sudanese intelligence and bin Laden's group; and Sudanese intelligence providing perimeter security for al Qaeda training facilities and safehouses.

Concerns that Iraq would work with al Qaeda against the Saudis did not end when bin Laden left Sudan in 1996. According to a CIA report summarized in a top-secret memo sent from the Pentagon to the Senate Intelligence Committee in the fall of 2003: "The Saudi Arabian National Guard went on a kingdom-wide heightened state of alert in late Dec. 2000 after learning that Saddam agreed to assist al Qaeda in attacking U.S. and U.K. interests in Saudi Arabia."

So the Clinton administration, given the evidence it had, was right to express concern about an Iraq-al Qaeda connection. We now know more. And with the vast number of documents from the Baathist regime that sit untranslated, we will learn more still. It's an odd time for the former president and his old advisers to be backing away from what they once so confidently told us. ♦

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY



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War Against the Infidels

The message behind the beheadings.

BY PAUL MARSHALL

THE BEHEADING of American Paul Johnson in Saudi Arabia was terrible enough in itself, but for me it struck strangely close to home.

Johnson's full name was Paul Marshall Johnson. When he was kidnapped, some media outlets, and the terrorists, referred to him as "Paul Marshall (Johnson)," with the surname in parentheses. The first I knew of the abduction was a phone call to my office from a network evening news reporter who thought that, since I have written on the Saudis and terrorism and was planning to return to the Middle East, I must be the one who had been kidnapped.

Then on Friday, June 18, al Qaeda announced Johnson's death with the words, "In answer to what we promised . . . to kill the hostage Paul Marshall (Johnson) . . . the infidel got his fair treatment," prompting more calls from friends and reporters.

Happily, of course, I could reassure them. But the episode underlined the fact that all of us are potential targets—and not just as Americans. Certainly, al Qaeda wants to kill Americans and drive them from the Arabian Peninsula, not least to cripple Saudi oil production. But the extremists, who beheaded a South Korean last week, have many more enemies than this and much larger goals.

The statement announcing Johnson's death referred to him as an "infidel"—in Arabic *kufr*, unbeliever—rather than as an American. This is entirely consistent with al Qaeda's religiously based worldview and its recent actions.

A few weeks before Johnson's death, the man believed to be his murderer, al Qaeda operative Abdelaziz al-Muqrin (himself reportedly killed on June 18 by Saudi security forces), had claimed credit for the May 29 massacre of 22 people at Khobar, Saudi Arabia. His statement on that occasion vowed, "We renew our determination to repel the crusader forces and their arrogance, to liberate the land of Muslims, to apply *sharia* [Islamic law] and cleanse the Arabian Peninsula of infidels." The Khobar attacks, too, were directed at "infidels" in general rather than just Americans.

But to understand indelibly who al Qaeda thinks its enemies are, it is advisable to read an even more chilling document. It is a long interview with another Saudi terrorist, one of al-Muqrin's followers, published on the al Qaeda-linked website *Sawt Al-Jihad* and translated from Arabic by the Middle East Media Research Institute. Although only brief excerpts can be given here, lengthy excerpts are available on MEMRI's website. The speaker, Fawwaz bin Muhammad Al-Nashami, commanded the Al-Quds [Jerusalem] Brigade, which took responsibility for the Khobar killings. In the interview he describes the murderous rampage (except where indicated, bracketed inserts are the translator's):

> We tied the infidel [a Briton] by one leg [behind the car]. . . . Everyone watched the infidel being dragged. . . . The infidel's clothing was torn to shreds, and he was naked in the street. The street was full of people, as this was during work hours, and everyone watched the infidel being dragged, praise and gratitude be to Allah. . . .
>
> We entered one of the companies' [offices], and found there an American infidel who looked like a director of one of the companies. I went into his office and called him. When he turned to me, I shot him *in the head, and his head exploded.* We entered another office and found one infidel from South Africa, and our brother Hussein slit his throat. We asked Allah to accept [these acts of devotion] from us, and from him. This was the South African infidel.
>
> We went out from the company [offices] and found our brother, Nimr the hero, standing at the entrance to the company and guarding us, drinking a little water as though he were on a hike. [He acted this way] because of his great courage—may Allah have mercy on him. . . .
>
> At the same time, we found a Swedish infidel. Brother Nimr cut off his head, and put it at the gate so that it would be seen by all those entering and exiting. We continued in the search for the infidels, and we slit the throats of those we found among them. . . .
>
> We found Filipino Christians. We cut their throats and dedicated them to our brothers the *Mujahideen* in the Philippines. [Likewise], we found Hindu engineers and we cut their throats too, Allah be praised. That same day, we purged Muhammad's land of many Christians and polytheists. . . .
>
> Afterwards, we turned to the hotel. We entered and found a restaurant, where we ate breakfast and rested a while. Then we went up to the next floor, found several Hindu dogs, and cut their throats. . . .
>
> The Indian Muslims told us that their manager was a vile Hindu who did not permit them to pray, and that he would arrive shortly. When [the manager] arrived, we verified his religion by means of his identifying documents, and we kept him with us for a short time [before killing him—PM].
>
> . . . brother Hussein was on the stairs and noticed an Italian infidel. He aimed his gun at him

Paul Marshall is a senior fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom and the author of Islam at the Crossroads.

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and told him to come closer. The infidel came closer. We saw his identifying documents . . . afterwards we would cut his throat and dedicate him to the Italians who were fighting our brothers in Iraq and to the idiotic Italian president who wants to confront the lions of Islam.

Reuters / Landov

An Islamist website with Abdelaziz al-Muqrin urges followers to "Get the infidel out of the Arab land."

Consistently, these Wahhabis describe their enemies, whatever their country or race or politics, as "infidels" or "polytheists." They are particularly joyful at the killing of an Italian, a Briton, and, on June 22, the South Korean Kim Sun-il, whose countries are participants in the coalition in Iraq. But they also kill a Swede and a South African, whose countries took no part in the invasion, and their greatest frisson seems to come from killing Hindus, who, as purported polytheists, are even further down al Qaeda's religious scale than "people of the book" such as Christians and Jews.

The pattern is consistent. It was discernible in the Riyadh massacres of November 8, 2003, when the target was Lebanese Christians. It's why, when BBC correspondent Frank Gardner lay bleeding in the street after being shot by terrorists in Riyadh earlier this month, he could buttress his claim for help by calling out in Arabic, "I'm a Muslim, help me, I'm a Muslim, help me."

Americans, to be sure, are perceived to be the greatest power among the infidels. But at Khobar, after debating the matter, the terrorists spared one American because he was a Muslim, and even apologized to him for getting blood on his carpet. Meanwhile, they happily killed Filipino, Swedish, British, Italian, and South African Christians and Indian Hindus—just as their allies in Thailand are killing Buddhists like the 63-year-old rubber-tapper Sieng Patkaoe, beheaded in late May. Muslims who do not share the extremists' vision are not spared. Al Qaeda's Algerian ally, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, has for several years been beheading Muslims it regards as apostates. Meanwhile Sudan's National Islamic Front, formerly called the Muslim Brotherhood and, like Hamas, an offshoot of the Egyptian group of the same name, is attempting to starve to death hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Darfur who do not share its vision.

These killings are not about the Abu Ghraib prison scandal or American actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, though those are grievances. They are not about Israel, though that is another grievance. In fact, most of the Islamist terrorists' victims worldwide are not Americans or even Westerners, but Asian and Middle Eastern Christians, Muslims, and Hindus. For the extremists, the justification for the slaughter is not current foreign policy but rather—as the religious exaltation, even ecstasy, in Al-Nashami's interview shows—an apocalyptic war to purge the world of all but their version of Islam.

Spaniards will not be spared because Spanish troops are gone from Iraq. Europe cannot make its way into the terrorists' good graces by distancing itself from America, any more than the United States can mollify the Islamists by acting through the United Nations or wooing "world opinion." These are fantasies.

Al Qaeda's enemy is anyone who opposes its program for the restoration of a unified Muslim *ummah*, ruled by a new Caliphate, governed by reactionary Islamic *sharia* law, and organized to wage *jihad* on the rest of the world. The lesson of Riyadh, Khobar, and Paul Marshall Johnson is that we can resist this program, in which case, tragically, we may well see more videos of beheadings. Or we can acquiesce to this program and see a great many more beheadings. These are the choices. We are in a war we must win. Everything else is wishful thinking. ♦

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Kerry's Zealotry

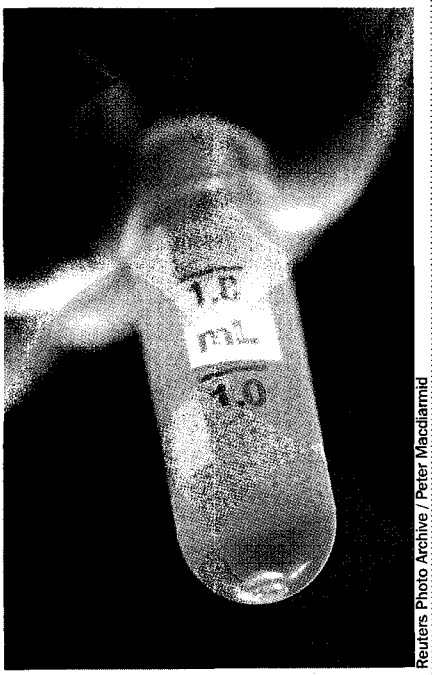
Extremism in defense of science is no virtue.

BY ERIC COHEN

IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR that John Kerry and the Democrats plan to make embryonic stem cell research a campaign issue. In a speech in Denver last week, Sen. Kerry attacked the Bush administration for letting "ideology and fear stand in the way" of medical progress. In a June 12 radio address, he called stem cells the "crucial next steps in humanity's uphill climb." He appealed to the memory and suffering of Ronald Reagan; he rattled off a long list of diseases that stem cells "have the power" to cure; he said "if we pursue the limitless potential of our science, and trust that we can use it wisely, we will save millions of lives and earn the gratitude of future generations." In a speech late last year, Kerry declared that "nothing illustrates this administration's anti-science attitude better than George Bush's cynical decision to limit research on embryonic stem cells."

The one-dimensional zeal of Kerry's stem cell campaign is striking. He offers no serious discussion of the ethical dilemmas involved in destroying nascent human life—just assertions that the ethical issues will be "resolved." He shows little respect for citizens who believe destroying human embryos is wrong—just demands that their tax dollars be used to support it. He says that we should "push the boundaries of medical exploration"—but says nothing about what ethical boundaries, if any, should be inviolable. For example: Should we use public funds to produce cloned embryos for research and destruction? Should we develop embryos—cloned or uncloned—to the fetal stage as a source of spare parts? Should we implant human embryos in animal wombs? Is there *anything* a civilized people should refuse to do—even if it might advance medicine in the future? On these ethical questions, Kerry is utterly silent. Or rather, he says, "I have full faith that our scientists will go forward with a moral compass"—but says nothing about what compass they'll use.

President Bush's policy on the federal funding of experiments using embryonic stem cells, announced in the summer of 2001, is both more moderate and more responsible than Kerry's call for science without limits. The Bush policy aims to promote medical progress by publicly funding research on a limited number of already-existing embryonic stem cell lines. But it also aims to respect the dignity of early human life by not using federal funds to promote embryo destruction. And it aims to respect the pluralism of the country by not forcing those who oppose embryo research to pay for it. The Bush policy satisfies no one completely: Pro-lifers lament the fact that embryo destruction proceeds apace in the private sector; scientists lament that only some embryonic stem cell research is eligible for public funding. But as an example of statesmanship on a morally contentious issue, the Bush policy is not only defensible but wise.



Reuters Photo Archive / Peter Macdiarmid

An ampoule of stem cells

By contrast, Sen. Kerry is demagogic. He repeatedly overstates the imminent promise of stem cell therapies. He asserts, for example, that "stem cells have the power to slow the loss of a grandmother's memory." But leading scientists say that embryonic stem cells will likely do no such thing; they are not a promising means of curing Alzheimer's. He promises that "millions" of sick patients will be cured, even though embryonic stem cell research is still so young that there have been no clinical trials. But for Kerry, stem cells have become a political religion, with scientists as the persecuted saviors. In a nation that spends more than $28 billion per year on federally funded biomedical research, this is ridiculous.

At the same time, Kerry seems to believe that scientific progress is beyond public debate; that its "limitless potential" should never be stopped; that only scientists should be allowed to decide where science will take us. But science requires self-government—not only by experts, but by citizens. The nation must decide which areas of science most deserve funding. It must debate the risks and benefits of useful but potentially dangerous technologies. And it must debate the consequences of ethically problematic research—especially when the progress of science does not necessarily mean the progress of civilization. Embryo research advocates want to save life; no one doubts their compassionate intentions. But compassion divorced

Eric Cohen is editor of the New Atlantis *and a resident scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

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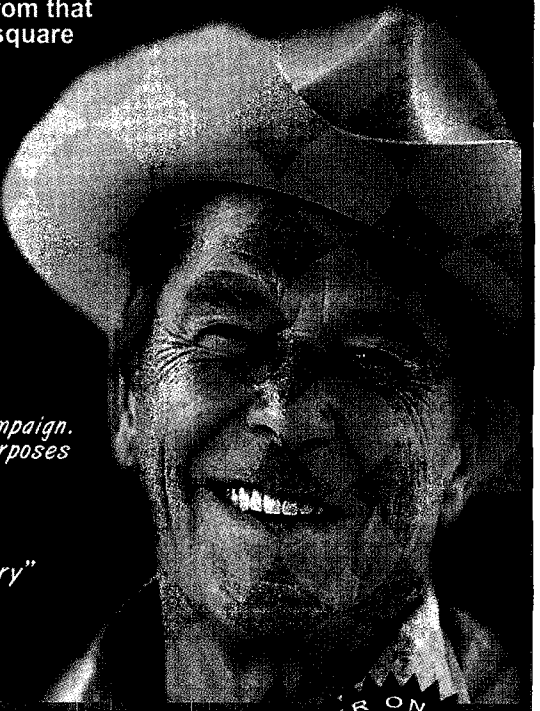

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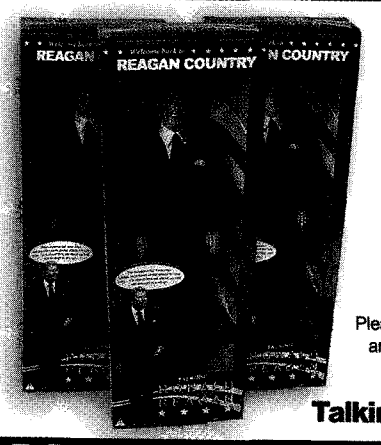

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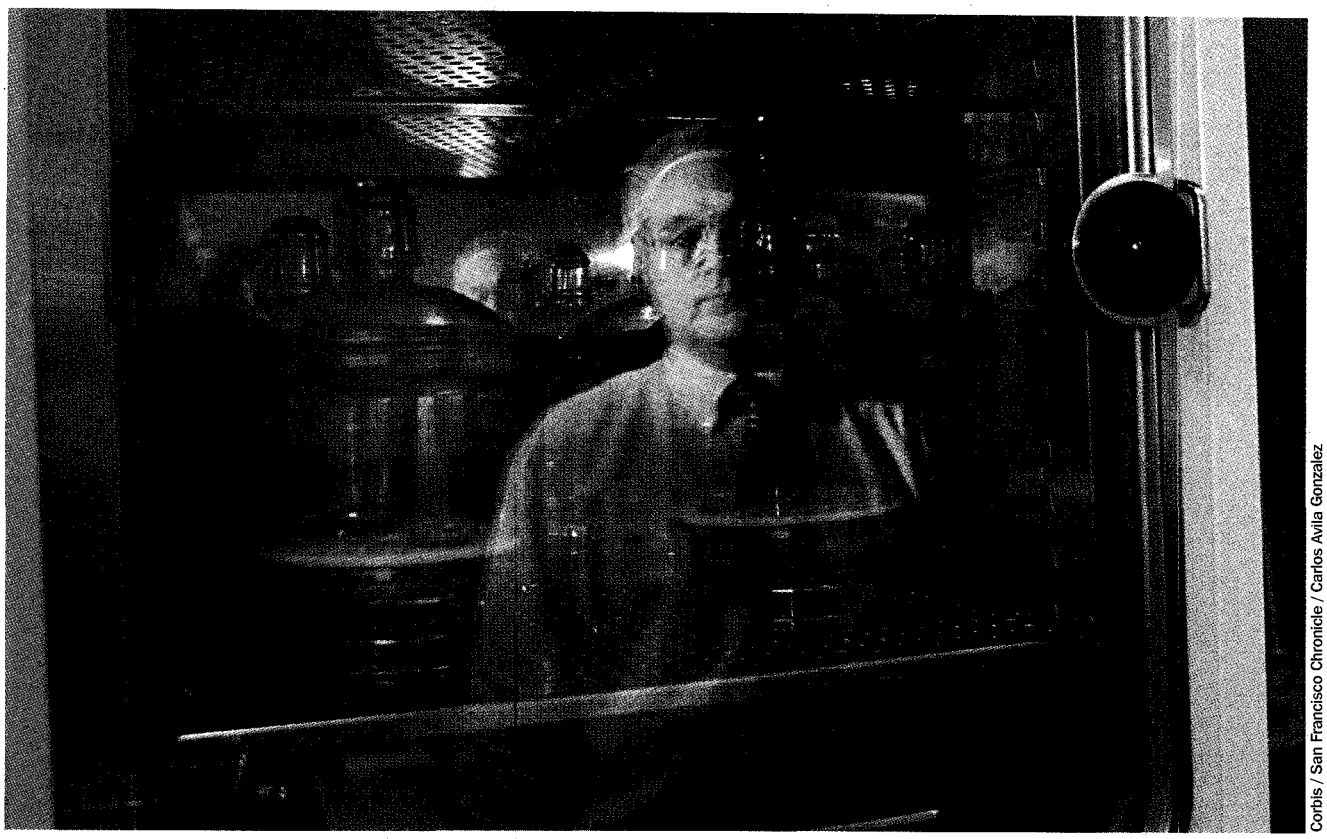

Corbis / San Francisco Chronicle / Carlos Avila Gonzalez

Fertility clinics such as the one above (featuring Dr. Carl Herbert of San Francisco) must store or destroy surplus embryos.

from ethical reasoning becomes unhinged.

In fact, in the stem cell debate, the self-declared "party of science" is not usually the party of reason. They appeal to the suffering of loved ones (or celebrities) to make the argument for destroying human embryos. Such suffering is real and often horrible. But suffering is not an argument, and the case for embryo research must rest on some notion of what embryos are, what standing they should be accorded, and the moral consequences of using them as means for our own benefit.

But on these hard questions, the leading advocates of federal funding for embryo research are largely silent. Sen. Kerry and his allies feel little need to make concrete moral arguments because they are on the side of "progress." To them, all ethical boundaries (and even all ethical deliberation) are the product of "ideology" and "fear." In Sen. Kerry's mind, progress seems to mean conquering all personal limits. Optimism is apparently the belief that I can—or I should—live forever. As Sen. Kerry put it in his radio address, a diagnosis of Alzheimer's "can't mean the end. . . . You won't let it. So in our own way, we become researchers and scientists. We become advocates and friends, and we reach for a cure that cannot—that must not—be too far away." The trouble is that our desire to conquer disease can make us justify unjustifiable things—like using nascent lives as tools to help others. And our faith in "humanity's uphill climb" can leave us blind or indifferent to the ethical consequences of our present behavior.

Ronald Reagan—"an eternal optimist," as Kerry described him when invoking his memory to advance the stem cell cause—had a very different faith in the future. When diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease after a long and heroic life, Reagan had the dignity to say goodbye to the nation he loved. He accepted that his own best days were behind him, but he believed in the future because he believed in those who would follow. "I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life," he wrote. "I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead." In other words, Reagan was an optimist, not a narcissist. And while he sympathized with the patients and families suffering with degenerative diseases, he would have found it indecent (or evil) to use the seeds of the next generation as tools for saving his own life. Progress, he knew, means not living forever, but passing down a more decent society to one's children.

The nation is obviously divided about whether destroying human embryos in search of cures is progress, regress, or both at once. And perhaps it is not easy to see the humanity of human embryos when faced with the agonizing suffering of those we know so well and love so dearly. But only a zealot would ignore the moral hazards of pursuing a national project of embryo destruction, and only a zealot would demand that all citizens pay for research that many citizens find unconscionable. In the embryonic stem cell debate, Bush is the moderate; Kerry is the zealot. ♦

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Defrosting Texas

Tom DeLay's redistricting may do in a 13-term Democrat. BY BETH HENARY

TEXAS REPUBLICANS wanted to accomplish several things last year, when they began redrawing the state's congressional districts. They wanted to increase the number of safe Republican seats to give them a majority. And they wanted to take revenge on, among others, 13-term Democrat Martin Frost. This they did by divvying up his shoo-in, 61 percent Democratic district. Now Frost is challenging incumbent Republican Pete Sessions for the newly redrawn District 32.

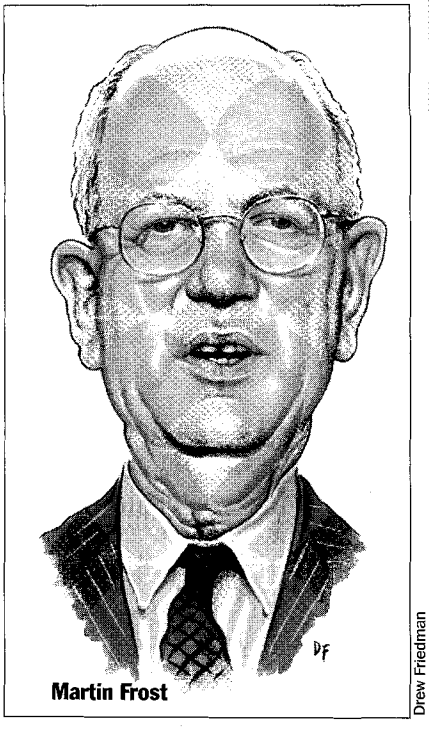
Knocking off the wily former Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairman would be especially gratifying for Republicans. Frost was the chief architect behind the 1990s redistricting, which kept gains in Congress scarce for the Texas GOP in that decade. This came to a stop only when Republicans captured both houses of the Texas legislature in 2002.

Early renderings of last year's redistricting map were kinder to Frost and other senior Democrats. But after Democratic state representatives and senators ran, respectively, for the Oklahoma and New Mexico borders to try to avoid the special redistricting sessions, Republicans made sure Frost would be short on chances to continue his career in Congress.

Frost has faced few formidable opponents in the past, but two of them are consulting with the Sessions campaign: home builder Ed Harrison and management consultant Shawn Terry. In addition, Sessions has inherited a phalanx of Republican workers anxious to depose Frost.

"He's somebody who creates a visceral, angry response," Sessions campaign manager Chris Homan says. "He's one of the classic, bomb-throwing Democrats of this generation."

Already, tempers have flared. Frost campaign manager Jess Fassler told the *Dallas Morning News* that Republicans, led by House majority leader Tom DeLay, had picked the wrong Democrat to mess with. They had put "Sessions's head on the guillotine, and we're ready to pull the lever." Sessions's people objected. Homan called on Frost to "remove his campaign manager from any position of responsibility and help Mr. Fassler seek therapy."



Martin Frost

Drew Friedman

Frost and Sessions hold similarly hawkish positions on national security and defense. In 2002 Frost was the only Democrat on the Select Committee on Homeland Security to vote in favor of the new Department of Homeland Security. He also supported both U.S.-led wars against Saddam Hussein.

The Sessions campaign believes, however, that Frost is going to have a tough time selling his anti-tax-cut record to the entrepreneurs in District 32. For the fall session of the 108th Congress, the National Taxpayers Union gave Frost an F and a 19 percent rating. Sessions got a B+ and a 70 percent rating for his votes on taxes.

In the spring, Frost made what Sessions's campaign calls a cynical attempt to improve his fiscal record. Like Sessions, Frost voted to make Bush's ten percent bracket permanent, to end the marriage penalty for good, and to help protect middle-income earners from paying more under the alternative minimum tax. Sessions personally carried the low-bracket bill in the House—leading Frost to charge that the GOP leadership had assigned him the work to buttress his reelection bid. At the same time, the Sessions campaign happily emphasizes Frost's hypocrisy in voting to make permanent tax cuts he opposed the first time around.

"The conversion he tried to make in that two-week period didn't stick," Homan says in this war of campaign spokesmen, pointing out that days after his pro-tax-cut votes, Frost did not support making the child tax credit permanent.

Another big issue of the campaign is pork. Frost "has a long career, and in that time you are going to do work that is going to benefit your city or home area," Homan says. "He didn't take lightly the task before him in bringing home the bacon."

Homan says Sessions will work to keep money in local communities, not tax people heavily, then return the money at pennies on the dollar. "Let's not make people have to go to Washington and kiss the ring and make sure they know who their sugar daddy was," he says. Called for a reaction to this characterization of his boss, Fassler said simply that Homan's comment was "nonsensical."

Sessions also accuses Frost of being ashamed of his party affiliation now

Beth Henary is a freelance editor and writer in Austin, Texas.

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that the area he aims to represent is 65 percent Republican. "Frost sent out three mailers and never once called himself a Democrat," Sessions says. "The Democrats are ashamed to call themselves Democrats."

The Frost campaign shot back that Sessions, too, released an informational mail piece in which he was not identified as Republican. Frost does not shy away from his party of choice, Fassler says, though he prefers to be thought of as an "independent thinker."

So what chance does a Democrat with a long and substantive career have in the 32nd district? Along with two small wealthy cities near Dallas and some middle-class suburbs, the district includes a minority section of Dallas that Frost has long represented. The district is "certainly winnable," Fassler says. "It's a very diverse district that's 50 percent minority." Actually, the total of black, Hispanic, and Asian voters comes to 45 percent. Frost's old, heavily Democratic district was 60 percent minority.

As to the nonminority sections, says Fassler, "There's a lot of voters here who have not been given a [Democratic] alternative in a lot of years." And Frost has been receiving support. Former secretary of state Madeleine Albright visited last week for a $175,000 fundraiser, and though Frost does not expect to be as well financed as Sessions, his campaign reports being ahead of the pace needed to reach its goal of $3 million. Local fire and police associations have already tossed their oomph behind Frost.

But neither endorsements nor money make solid Republicans vote Democrat, and Sessions's organization thinks the sheer chemistry of District 32 makes him hard to beat. Most of the high-turnout precincts with large numbers of voters are Republican strongholds, notes Sessions's campaign manager Homan.

Any victory scenario Frost can come up with is "cold-fusion physics," says Homan. "He needs all his 'ifs' to work out. And then he needs us to sit back and do nothing." ♦

Methodists and Marriage

A mainline denomination holds out against same-sex unions. BY MARK D. TOOLEY

ONE OF AMERICA'S largest Protestant denominations voted in May to prohibit the solemnization of same-sex unions in its churches, to withhold ordination from practicing homosexuals, to ban church funding for "gay" causes, to require celibacy for its single clergy, and to endorse civil laws that define marriage as uniting a man and a woman. And it wasn't the Southern Baptists.

No, all this occurred at the governing General Conference of the United Methodist Church, a "mainline" denomination whose leadership has been decidedly liberal for decades. Over 8 million strong, the United Methodists are the third largest church in the United States after the Roman Catholics and the Southern Baptists, and the turn they have taken on the issue of homosexuality is almost directly opposite to that of the quintessential mainline group, the Episcopalians.

The Episcopal Church—only one-fourth the size of the United Methodists—has been much in the spotlight since the election of its first openly homosexual bishop last year. Advocates of approving homosexuality hoped the Episcopal Church was a harbinger of America's religious future. But the Methodists aren't following its lead.

The United Methodists have always been Main Street, to the Episcopalians' Wall Street. They are more suburban and small town than the Episcopalians, more southern and midwestern, and on the whole more culturally conservative. United Methodists are also highly international. Almost one-third of the U.S.-based denomination is now overseas, mostly in Africa. This represents not only growth abroad but also diminishing numbers at home.

Methodism was America's largest church as recently as the late 19th century, but after 40 years of continuous decline, the United Methodists have gone from 11 million to 8.3 million in the United States. Meanwhile, their former mission churches in places like the Congo, Angola, and Mozambique are surging. Full of enthusiastic recent converts, these congregations are ones where liberal theology holds little sway. Africans and to a lesser extent Filipinos have been crucial to setting United Methodism's more culturally conservative direction.

In the floor debates over homosexuality at the church's 2004 General Conference in Pittsburgh, African delegates seized the lead in arguing against any weakening of the church's stance that homosexual behavior is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

"We have received teaching on marriage from our missionaries," explained one delegate from the Congo, noting the rejection of polygamy. "We Africans, we accepted this teaching, and we became Christians."

A Liberian delegate was blunter than any U.S. delegate would have dared be: "I don't think the United Methodist Church can license people to go to hell. . . . The church must always speak against every kind of sin."

Mark D. Tooley directs the United Methodist committee at the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

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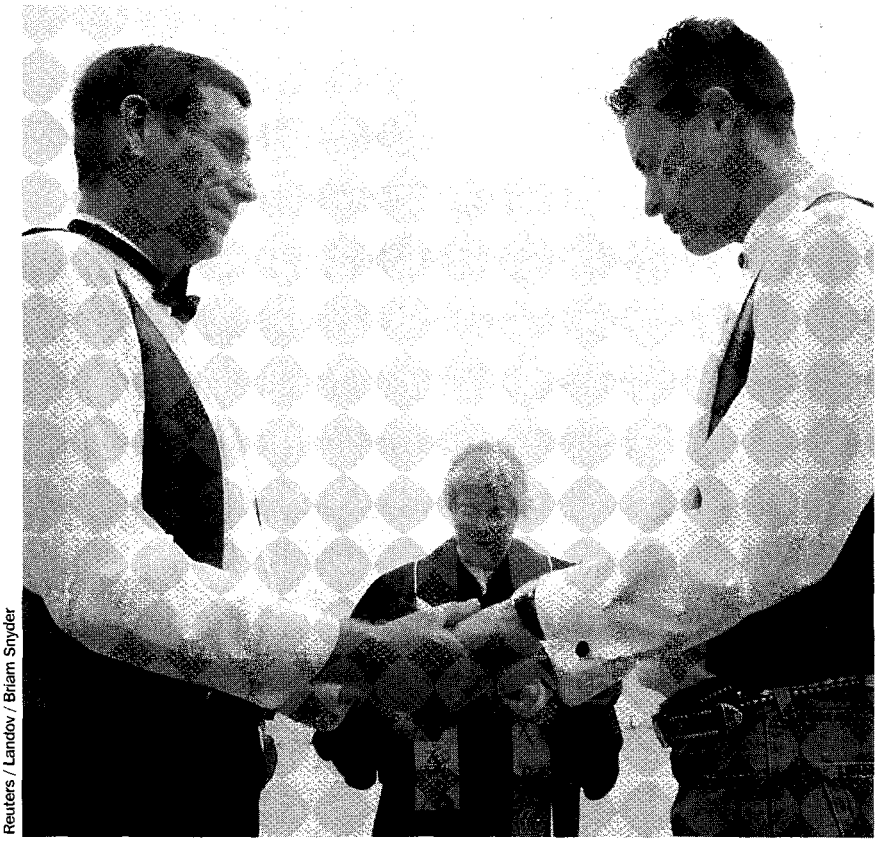

Reuters / Landov / Brian Snyder

A couple in Provincetown, Mass., ties the knot.

About two-thirds of the nearly 1,000 delegates voted to reaffirm and in some cases strengthen the church's disapproval of homosexual practice. Compromise language that would have acknowledged internal church differences over homosexuality was rejected, though by a smaller margin.

Sixty percent voted that homosexual practice was incompatible with Christian teaching, 72 percent voted to uphold the ban on practicing homosexual clergy, 80 percent reaffirmed the ban on same-sex unions, and 85 percent reaffirmed that clergy must be celibate if single and monogamous if married.

Seventy-seven percent voted to affirm "laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman," making the United Methodists the first mainline church to adopt a political stance on same-sex unions. The ban on funding of homosexual advocacy by the national church was expanded to include regional bodies. And adultery, premarital sex, homosexual practice, and same-sex ceremonies were all made chargeable offenses that could precipitate church trials.

Supporters of endorsing homosexual behavior responded with anger. "Few expected that there would be any moderation in the denomination's position regarding sexual orientation," complained the Rev. Greg Dell, a Chicago pastor put on leave of absence several years ago for conducting a same-sex ceremony. "But not many were ready for the further tightening of the belt of bigotry that is occurring in Pittsburgh."

After the votes, several hundred demonstrators filled the convention floor in protest, while supportive delegates and bishops stood in solidarity. One delegate smashed a communion chalice to the floor, to symbolize the "breaking" of the denomination.

Many liberal United Methodists believe only fear is keeping the church from following secular society in embracing homosexuality. They are waiting for what they believe is inevitable.

But time is not on their side. Liberal religion is demographically dying in the United States, as it is around the world. Almost all the United Methodist churches in America that are growing are in the deep South. There are now more Methodists in Georgia than in all the Pacific and Rocky Mountain states combined.

The conservative African church, meanwhile, keeps growing. This year, the formerly autonomous Methodist Church of the Ivory Coast, with a million members, joined the United Methodist Church. This raised the non-U.S. component of the denomination from 20 percent to 30 percent.

Church liberals are flummoxed. For decades they styled themselves champions of the Third World. But Third World Christians are conservative on what is, for liberals, the most important cultural issue.

United Methodism, like most old mainline denominations, exerts cultural influence beyond its numbers. Although less than 3 percent of the U.S. population are United Methodists, about 12 percent of members of Congress are, including Hillary Clinton. So are President Bush and Vice President Cheney.

With their historic focus on civic righteousness, United Methodists proliferate in state legislatures, on city councils and school boards, in chambers of commerce and union halls. Polls show that United Methodist lay people tilt slightly Republican in their party preference, but United Methodism's elites, especially in the national bureaucracy, are reflexively on the left.

Among America's 160 million church members, only a small percentage belong to denominations that favor legitimizing homosexual behavior. In this instance, the United Methodists are more in tune than Episcopalians with American religion overall—and with middle America. The failure of same-sex "marriage" and other innovations of the sexual revolution to gain validation from the Methodists may prove to reflect the judgment of the nation as a whole. ♦

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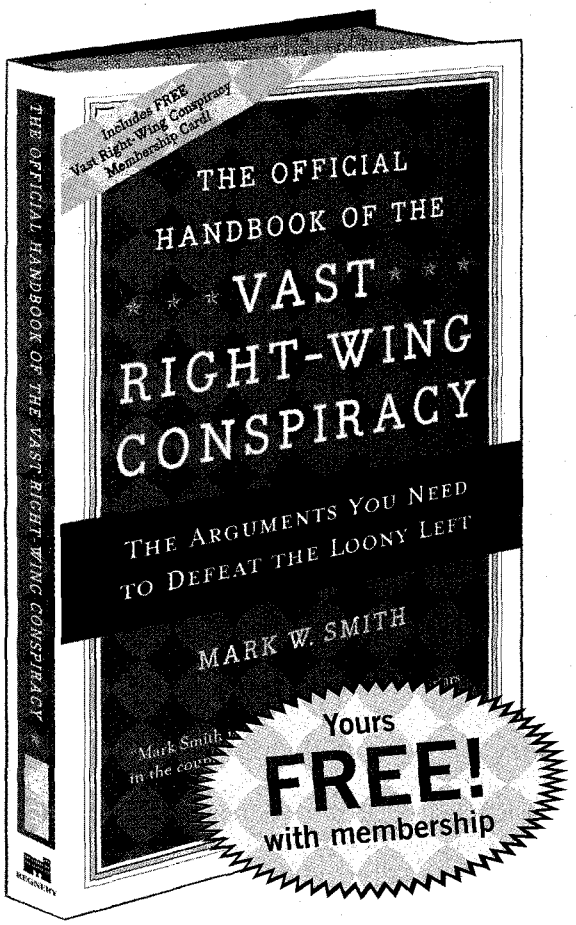

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A Close-Run Thing

The extraordinary success of D-Day

By Fred Barnes

With the bias of hindsight, success on D-Day, June 6, 1944, now seems inevitable—a simple matter of momentum. The Germans had been driven out of North Africa, Sicily, and the southern half of Italy, and lost all the initiative in World War II. Hitler had made two egregious mistakes: the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the reckless declaration of war against the United States six months later. The German army was over-stretched, weary, and dispirited, and its senior officers already plotting to assassinate Hitler. Old men and boys were all that was left to guard the Atlantic Coast from an Allied assault. The German U-Boat threat at sea had collapsed, partly because of one of the greatest Allied achievements of the war, the cracking of the German code, Ultra. The Luftwaffe was a shadow of its old self. The German homeland was under massive bombing attack, day and night.

All of this suggests that when Dwight Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, wrote a statement to be given to the press if the D-Day landings were thrown back, he was indulging a weak pessimism. He must have known victory was all but certain.

Ike knew nothing of the kind. The night before D-Day, he said, "I hope to God I know what I'm doing." The success of the invasion—success that made it a turning point in history—was not inevitable. It was contingent on many factors, perhaps the most important was the deception of the Germans. The British and American scheme known as Operation Fortitude worked, persuading Germans a huge army commanded by General George Patton was left behind in England on D-Day, ready to stage the real assault on the continent on a later day at a different site. The belief the landings on five beaches of Normandy were merely a feint was firmly held by Hitler and the German high command for weeks after D-Day. They feared a larger attack near Calais, 150 miles away, at the shortest point for crossing the English Channel, or maybe in Belgium or the Netherlands, or even in Norway. As a result, nineteen German divisions and more than 500,000 men were deployed near Calais, and more than 372,000 were kept in Norway to ward off a fictitious joint Anglo-Soviet operation.

For that matter, what if Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox and the best of the German generals, had had his way? He was assigned to erect the coastal defense, the Atlantic Wall, from France to the Low Countries. His plan for a barrier might well have impeded an invasion, if only he'd been given the resources to build it. Even the scaled-back version of his wall led to thousands of Allied deaths on D-Day. Rommel also failed to gain command of four Panzer divisions that, if rushed to Normandy, might have made D-Day a vic-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

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tory for the Germans. And what if Rommel had been in Normandy on June 6 rather than on a brief holiday in Germany? Or what if Hitler's secret weapon, the V-1 and V-2 rockets, had been available earlier? The first of these flying bombs was launched against England a week after D-Day, too late to change the course of the war. And what if the best-kept secret in war since the Trojan horse—the actual date and location of D-Day—had leaked, as it almost did? Finally, what if Winston Churchill had let his qualms about invading France prevail?

All this uncertainty of success is what prompted the ringing of church bells across a relieved America once a Normandy beachhead had been secured at least temporarily on June 6. This doubtfulness, too, plays a role in today's near-obsessive focus on D-Day here and in England.

But there are also two bigger reasons for attention to D-Day. The first is the fact the D-Day assault on sea, land, and air was the largest military operation in history. And the second is the fact that D-Day won the war. Within three months, Paris had fallen to the Allies. By March, Allied troops had crossed the Rhine. And within a year, Hitler had committed suicide.

Next to Gettysburg, D-Day is the subject of more books than any battle in which Americans took part. On each ten-year anniversary, more and more are published, and this year, the sixtieth, is no exception. For many readers, *The Longest Day* by Cornelius Ryan, published in 1959, remains the classic account. On the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day in 1994, Stephen Ambrose came out with *D-Day: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, a bit longer and more comprehensive than Ryan's study but just as readable.

Of the dozens of new books, six are worth noticing. *D-Day* by Sir Martin Gilbert, the prolific British historian and official biographer of Churchill, looks at the invasion from a strategic standpoint. An American, Joseph Balkoski, concentrates on the botched and bloody American landing in *Omaha Beach*. In *Ten Days to D-Day*, David Stafford, another British writer, traces the lives of eight people caught up in D-Day, including an American paratrooper, a French schoolteacher, and a female British secret agent who parachuted into France.

D-Day lends itself to picture books and maps. *D-Day: The Greatest Invasion—A People's History* by Dan van der Vat is as good a collection of pictures (with extensive explanatory notes) as you'll find. *The D-Day Atlas* by Charles Messenger is exactly what its title says it is: lots of maps, and understandable ones at that. *The D-Day Experience* by Richard Holmes takes a multimedia approach, with a CD-ROM, pictures, maps, and replicas of World War II documents—all in all, informative and quite entertaining.

D-Day
by Martin Gilbert
Wiley & Sons, 240 pp., $19.95

Omaha Beach
D-Day, June 6, 1944
by Joseph Balkoski
Stackpole, 410 pp., $26.95

Ten Days to D-Day
Citizens and Soldiers on the Eve of the Invasion
by David Stafford
Little Brown, 400 pp., $26.95

D-Day
The Greatest Invasion—A People's History
by Dan van der Vat
Bloomsbury, 176 pp., $40

The D-Day Atlas
Anatomy of the Normandy Campaign
by Charles Messenger
Thames & Hudson, 176 pp., $34.95

The D-Day Experience
From the Invasion to the Liberation of Paris
by Richard Holmes
Andrews McMeel, 64 pp., $39.95

Gilbert in particular is enthralled with the program of deception and the fits and starts leading up to June 6. "One way in which failure would be assured for [D-Day] was if the Germans could throw into Normandy sufficient divisions to overwhelm the Allied forces, not only on the day of the landings and in the week after that, but even in the month after the landings," he writes. They didn't because they were deceived into thinking D-Day itself was a deception. On D-Day, "the art of strategic deception had found its finest hour," Gilbert insists.

Initially it was President Franklin Roosevelt and Eisenhower who were wary of committing an invasion of Europe, wanting instead to emphasize the Pacific front. Then, at Casablanca in January 1943, they opted for an attack on Western Europe. But Churchill had second thoughts, wondering if the Italian campaign might be an adequate second front. A few months later, Churchill developed a preference for a landing in northern Norway, called Operation Jupiter. Gilbert describes this as a "serious" alternative to Normandy, but "only if circumstances were to render" a Normandy invasion "impossible."

To get the most out of Balkoski's *Omaha Beach*, it will help to have read an overview of D-Day such as Gilbert's, Ryan's, or Ambrose's. Balkoski's minute-by-minute account dwells on the most narrow of details, but it is nonetheless riveting and aided by quotations from many of the participants. He doesn't sugarcoat a thing, noting repeatedly that the air attack (which General Omar Bradley said would be "the Greatest Show on Earth") and the naval bombardment failed to hit their targets. Nor were engineers able to sweep away mines and obstacles effectively. So infantrymen were left defenseless as they clambered out of landing craft. About 2,000 of the 4,500 deaths on D-Day occurred at Omaha Beach, mostly before the soldiers had come close to reaching the shore. They were at the mercy of a larger and better trained German force than expected.

Yet within three hours of the 6:30 A.M. landing, Omaha was a success. How so? Balkoski offers "four main reasons: the Germans were surprised; the Americans applied overwhelming force; American soldiers were superbly prepared for the task; and the German defenses were incomplete." Of these four reasons, the biggest unknown on D-Day was how the American soldiers would perform. Wellington said the

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battle of Waterloo was won on the "playing fields of Eton." Balkoski says, "victory on Omaha Beach was achieved on the training grounds of the Assault Training Center" in England, where American troops spent many months.

Pinned on the beach, officers realized they had to change plans. With passage inland blocked, they would have to climb the bluffs to survive. Without waiting for orders, they seized the initiative. Colonel George Taylor of the First Division shouted to his men, "Get the hell off the beach! If you stay on, you're dead or about to die." A Ranger officer yelled out, "Rangers, lead the way." Captain James Pence of the First Division jumped up and screamed, "Come on, you bastards, let's go! If we're going to die, we might as well die a little further inland." In all these instances, their men followed.

And then there was Brigadier General Norman Cota of the Twenty-Ninth Infantry Division. "Instances of generals being precisely in the right place at the right time are a rarity in military history," writes Balkoski, "but this was undeniably one of those cases." To the astonishment of riflemen lying prone on Omaha Beach, "Cota walked upright, unflinchingly, daring the enemy to bring him down. . . . Cota drew stares from the unbelieving GIs as he earnestly waved his Colt pistol in the air, offering frequent shouts of advice and encouragement in his harsh workingman's accent." Finding a brave leader, the soldiers rose and fought their way off the beach.

Of D-Day, Balkoski says history gives it meaning to its soldiers, alive or dead. "D-Day was the decisive chapter of a twentieth-century *Iliad*, and when no one remains alive who can declare, 'I was there,' the storytellers will carry on, in Homeric fashion, to preserve the tales of bygone warriors little different from those cast upon the shores of Troy," he writes. "The D-Day epic will be preserved, told and retold for as long as there are people who are devoted to their ancestors—and to freedom."

Indeed, it will be recalled, not as an inevitable success, but as a hard-fought victory. ◆

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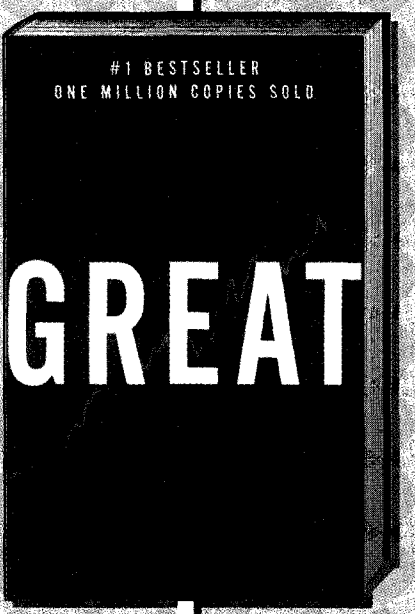

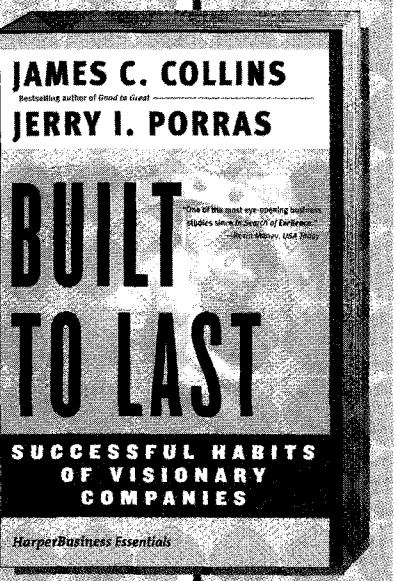

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America's Poet?

Bob Dylan's achievement.

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

"Not all great poets—like Wallace Stevens—are great singers," Bob Dylan once suggested. "But a great singer—like Billie Holiday—is always a great poet."

It would be an enterprise in itself to disentangle the many ways in which this brief statement is dead wrong. The antithesis, if it is meant as an antithesis, between poet and singer, is false to begin with. The "not all" is based on a nonexpectation: How many poets have been singers at all? Certainly not Dylan Thomas, the Welsh boozer and bawler from whom Bob Dylan—a Jewish loner from Hibbing, Minnesota, who was born as Robert Zimmerman—annexed his *nom de chanteur*.

Dylan's Visions of Sin
by Christopher Ricks
Ecco, 528 pp., $26.95

Other cryptic or pretentious observations, made by Bob Dylan down the years, have licensed the suspicion that he's been putting people on and starting wild-goose chases for arcane or esoteric readings that aren't there. There are also those who maintain that Dylan can't really sing. (This latter group has recently been reluctantly increasing.) Of his ability as a poet, however, there can be no reasonable doubt. I used to play two subliterary games with Salman Rushdie. The first, not that you asked, was to retitle Shakespeare plays as if they had been written by Robert Ludlum. (Rushdie, who invented the game, came up with *The Elsinore Vacillation*, *The Dunsinane Reforestation*, *The Kerchief Implication*, and *The Rialto Sanction*.) The second was to recite Bob Dylan songs in a deadpan voice as though they were blank verse. In addition to the risk of the ridiculous, it can become quite hypnotic. Try it yourself with "Mr. Tambourine Man": It works so well, you hardly care that a tambourine man can't really be playing a song. "Lily, Rosemary and The Jack of Hearts," "Chimes of Freedom," and "Desolation Row" all have the same feeling.

But as a guide to Dylan's poetic moments, do we really need help from Christopher Ricks, author of *Keats and Embarrassment*, editor of T.S. Eliot's juvenilia, instructor on the funny side of *Tristram Shandy*, and all-around literary mandarin? Need him or not, we now have Ricks—who, in *Dylan's Visions of Sin*, performs over five-hundred pages of literary criticism on the lyrics. Reading Dylan as the bard of guilt and redemption, Ricks takes his stand on the recurrence in the songs of the seven deadly sins, only just balanced as they are by the four cardinal virtues and the three theological virtues (or heavenly graces: faith, hope, and charity).

It's Ricks's own potentially deadly virtues that bother me. What temptation should one avoid above all, if one is a former professor of English at Cambridge? The temptation to be matey, or hip, or cool—especially if one is essaying the medium of popular music. But Ricks begins his book like this: "All I really want to do is—what, exactly? Be friends with you? Assuredly I don't want to do you in, or select you or dissect you or inspect you or reject you."

The toe-curling embarrassment of this is intensified when one appreciates that Ricks is addressing his subject, not his reader. Why did he leave out other verbs Dylan had in that song: *simplify you, classify you, deny, defy, or crucify you?* And surely, he's already at least "selected" him?

Then, accused by one of his usually admiring rivals in Dylanology, Alex Ross of the *New Yorker*, of "fetishizing the details of a recording," the prof resorts to unbearable archness. ("What me? All the world knows that it is women's shoes that I am into.") Some of Ricks's jokey attempts at making puns work ("cut to the chaste"), but "interluckitor" is a representative failure. This last is coined to deal with a claim by Dylan, made in 1965, that every song of his "tails off with—'Good Luck—I hope you make it.'" Such a claim, if taken seriously, would in any case vitiate most of Dylan's claims to profundity.

Having said that distinguished academics ought not to try and be ingratiating with the young, I pull myself up a bit and realize that true Dylan fans are probably well into their fifties by now. It must have been in 1965 that I first heard what Philip Larkin called, in a quasi-respectful review of *Highway 61 Revisited*, his "cawing, derisive voice." And it will be with me until my last hour. Some of this is context. The "sixties" didn't really begin until after the Kennedy assassination (or "Nineteen Sixty-Three," as Larkin had it in another reference), and Bob Dylan was as good a handbook for what was supposedly happening as Joseph Heller. Much of it of course also had to do with the sappiness, in both "sap" senses, of adolescence. Yet even at the time, I was somehow aware that Dylan wasn't all that young, and didn't take "youth" at its face value. A good number of his best songs were actually urging you to grow up, or at any rate to get real. Dylan respected his elders, most notably Woody Guthrie. And he was braced for disillusionment. *How does it feel? Don't think twice, it's all right. It's all over now, baby blue. I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.*

Ricks essentially wants to argue that Dylan has always been swayed by the elders and that his verses consistently defer to the authorities. How else to explain, for example, the many latent affinities between "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" and the Book of Ezekiel? The kings of Tyre, the dying music, the futility of earthly possessions. . . . That's Covetousness taken care of, with Pride (or at any rate hubris) given a passing

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Vanity Fair. *He is writing a study of Thomas Jefferson in the Eminent Lives series.*

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whack into the bargain. Six sins to go.

Ricks has no success with Greed (as he admits) and not much with Sloth, either. There is a good deal of anomie and fatalism in Dylan; a fair amount of shrugging and dismissal and an abiding sense of waste and, equally often, of loss. It's pervasive but nonspecific in "Time Passes Slowly," which Ricks interrogates without any great profit. So I pushed on to "Lust," and was taken aback.

"Lay, Lady, Lay" is one of the great sexual entreaties, and it has in common with "I Want You" and "If You Gotta Go, Go Now" a highly ethical reliance on the force of gentle persuasion. There is no blackmail, moral or otherwise, and no hint of a threat or even a scene in the event of nonconsummation. But nor is there any doubt of what the minstrel wants: *His clothes are dirty but his hands are clean. / And you're the best thing that he's ever seen*. Of this false modesty and abject flattery, Ricks astonishingly says that "his hands are clean because he is innocent, free of sin: no lust, for all the honest desire, and no guile." Had Dylan written "his clothes are dirty but his mind is clean," this might have been believable. And is there no guile in the succeeding stanza?

Stay, lady, stay, stay with your man awhile
Why wait any longer for the world to begin?
You can have your cake and eat it too.
Why wait any longer for the one you love
When he's standing in front of you?

Ricks then moves to a laborious comparison with Donne's "On His Mistress Going To Bed," at which point I thought, well, as soon as I turn the page he'll stop clearing his throat and make the obvious metaphysical connection to Andrew Marvell and "To His Coy Mistress." But no. And here's the clue to Ricks's method. The words "bed," "show," "see," "man," "hands," "world" he says all appear in both Donne and Dylan, while the words "unclothed" and "lighteth" appear in Donne, balanced by "clothes" and "light" in Dylan.

Shall we agree that all the words just specified are in somewhat common use today, and were in equally ordinary employment in the seventeenth century? Whereas, if you care to glance again at the Dylan lines I just cited, not only do you think at once of Marvell's *Had we but world enough and time / This coyness, Lady, were no crime* (which gets "lady" in there, right enough, and in delicious apposition to "world" at that), but you also find yourself grappling with Marvell's gentle but urgent sense of delay and frustration. Dylan further beseeches the lady to stay *while the night is still ahead* and to *have [her] cake and eat it too*: Metaphysically speaking this is not so remote from Marvell's reminder that the darkness of death will last an awfully long time, while in the grave the worms may dine long and well. This is something different from Donne's poem, which swiftly becomes a near-raunchy celebration of achieved carnal knowledge of someone familiar to him. Finally, Marvell speaks beautifully and seductively about keeping the sun in motion since there's no chance of making it stand still, and Dylan longs to see his beloved "in the morning light," having banished the night in the only way that lies open to him. I hope I don't boast about my own poor exegesis, but Ricks's procedure is more like that of the people who pore over Bible codes or kabbalistic crossword puzzles.

Dylan's version of anger is sardonic and bitter: an exemplary match for the "cawing, derisive" tones noted by Larkin. In "Masters of War," "Only a Pawn In Their Game," and "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," he said to the military-industrial complex and the racists, in effect, "You win. For now. But for now you also have to live with your shame. And judgment will follow, and is coming." (I have always hoped, for this reason, that Joan Baez was wrong in claiming that Dylan wrote "When The Ship Comes In"—his most Jeremiad and vengeful poem—in response to bad service at some hotel.)

"The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" was based on a real event in 1963: the lethal beating of Hattie Carroll by William Zanzinger in a Baltimore hotel. Zanzinger's lenient treatment by the courts fired Dylan into a hot rage, yet producing his most glacial and most measured poem of outrage and contempt. He simply relates the story, with deadly counterpoint as between the rich and careless white man and the dispensable black servitor. The song never uses the words "black" or "white," as Ricks points out, but just: He *owns a tobacco farm of six hundred acres*, while she *emptied the ashtrays on a whole other level*. Thus is the plantation relationship recast and, as Ricks rightly says, "it's a terrible thing that you know this [their respective colors] from the story." But then again, as Ricks also emphasizes, Dylan's affecting line *And she never done nothing to William Zanzinger* is a sort of clue. I have always thought that this was Dylan ventriloquizing, without condescension, the "Black English" demotic comment on the affair. Ricks improves on my intuition by giving the example of James Baldwin in *The Amen Corner*: "He hadn't never done nothing to nobody."

Doomed and determined to destroy all the gentle, in Dylan's haunting phrase, Zanzinger slew Hattie Carroll *with a cane that he twirled around his diamond-ring finger*, and who would pass up the chance to recall the first murderer, Cain, in this context? Not Ricks, who also calls attention to the words *lay slain by a cane* and to the triple repetition of the word "table," which closes three consecutive lines. "Does this *-able*" he inquires, "prepare for the word that soon follows, 'cane'? Cain and Abel, masculine and feminine endings?" Well, no, I shouldn't think so. Whatever the song is about, it most decidedly isn't about fratricide. And Cain and Abel—scarcely unique metaphors where murder is con-

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cerned—appear in other Dylan songs under their own names. Ricksian hermeneutics has its limits.

I could, nonetheless, have used some more counsel from Ricks about the title. In what way was Hattie Carroll's death "lonesome"? There is an unmistakable sentimentality in this word; a tear-jerking note that is wondrously absent from the song itself. Insufficient guidance is forthcoming: Ricks proposes without much brio that Dylan "perhaps" wanted the word to evoke a contrast between Hattie's death and the crowded hotel. But with or without that "perhaps," ultimately, everybody dies alone.

Ricks's closing thought is superior. He argues that T.S. Eliot understood the difference between writing religious poetry and writing poetry religiously, and that Dylan with "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" has written politically rather than merely writing a political song. That seems to be a distinction well worth observing, most especially at a time like the present with its ephemeral garbage of pseudo-protest. ("We've suffered for our music—now it's your turn.") The finest fury is the most controlled. One still feels a generous anger when listening to the song—incidentally, William Zanzinger turned up again a few years ago in the Baltimore courts, for leasing black people squalid, waterless cabins that he didn't even own—and the pairing of generosity with anger (annexed from Orwell out of Dickens) might license some interpenetration of sin and virtue, or even sin with grace.

It's back to hermeneutics in Ricks's study of "Love Minus Zero / No Limit," which occurs in the chapter on "Temperance." As you will recall, the song begins *My love she speaks like silence / Without ideals or violence*, while in a succeeding verse:

In the dime stores and bus stations
People talk of situations
Read books, repeat quotations
Draw conclusions on the wall.

For Ricks, this is Belshazzar's feast in the fifth chapter of Daniel: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. And this is the writing that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it."

Building upon this, Ricks insists that the biblical "candlestick" furnishes Dylan not only with his song's reference to candles and matchsticks, but the biblical word "numbered" may have a relation to the "Minus Zero" in Dylan's title. This same chapter of Daniel has the words "people," "tremble," "wise men," and "gifts"—and also "spake," "said," and "that night." What more could one want as proof of the direct influence of the prophet Daniel upon the song?

Something more, as it happens. *The words of the prophets are written on the subway wall*, as Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel were to say in "The Sounds of Silence," and it was as obvious to me the first time I heard "Love Minus Zero / No Limit" as it is today that Dylan was alluding to graffiti: a special emphasis in that time and place. If you really want to connect Babylon to Dylan, you might have better luck with "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts": *The cabaret was silent—except for the drilling in the wall.*

At the same time I was digesting all this in *Dylan's Visions of Sin*, I noticed that Ricks deals with an obvious contradiction in his account (the king being "reduced" to the pawn) in the following evasive manner: "'Even the pawn must hold a grudge.' Even the king? Even Dylan, whom I ungrudgingly admire?" This is ingratiation raised to the level of unction. I remember the first time that I ever felt a qualm about Dylan's claims. It was early on as well: He said that he had written "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" at the time of the Cuban missile crisis—and he had been in such an apocalyptic hurry that every line could be the first line of another song. Even in my early teens, I knew that that was bravado.

Oddly, perhaps, Ricks spends almost no time on the influences that Dylan actually does affirm or the influences that we know about. "Blowin' In the Wind" borrows from an old slave spiritual called "No More Auction Block," with its haunting words about "many thousands gone." Dylan was actually sued by Dominic Behan, brother of Brendan, for plagiarizing not only the tune but the concept of "The Patriot Game" for his "With God on Our Side." More recently, his song about a Japanese yakuza was tracked down to an obscure but identifiable source, while the deft Daniel Radosh has blogged a near-perfect match between Dylan's "Cross the Green Mountain" (written for Ron Maxwell's movie *Gods and Generals*) and Walt Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father." If I had to surmise another influence, it would be William Blake, not just for the speculative reasons given by Ricks but because, as Blake phrased it: "A Last Judgment is Necessary because Fools flourish."

Even secularists often find themselves thinking things like that, and there is a store of words in the Bible that springs ready-made, as it were. Thus, Ricks could well be correct in thinking that Dylan's "how many times" is an echo both of "How long, oh Lord, how long?" and of Christ's injunction in Matthew on the number of times that it might be needful to turn the other cheek. (He may also be right, though coming down-market more than he likes, in discerning a vague sacred/profane overlap between "I Believe in You" and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes.")

But Christianity as a religion of peace and tolerance and forgiveness is not,

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superficially at least, compatible with ringing phrases about judgment and the sword: In order to believe in the apparently kindly and reassuring verses about taking no thought for the morrow, one had better have a lively sense of the second coming. This was the line that Dylan actually did take in his born-again period, where he spoke of "spiritual warfare" as well as his "precious angel," and warned that there would be no hiding place on the day. But this, which produced some of his most beautiful writing (and singing) would appear to have been as lightly affected as the gritty dustbowl socialism which the Old Left was already denouncing him for abandoning as far back as 1964. Dylan dropped it and kept moving on.

Indeed, I am sure I remember Ricks welcoming him "back," as it were, when he came up with "Most of the Time" about fifteen years ago. But here, and in his discussion of this superbly apt and lovely and troubling song, I began to write heavy notes in the book's margin: "Most of the time," Ricks writes, "'Most of the Time' consists of repeating the words, 'most of the time.'" [Marginal note: *Oh no it doesn't.*] Unbelievably, Ricks manages to go on for a half-dozen pages about this song, without ever achieving the realization that it is one of the most vertiginous, knife-edge accounts of a post-love trauma ever penned. You should only listen to the song if you are not currently trying to persuade yourself that "it" is all over and that you are all over "it."

Ricks wraps up blandly: "It is only most of the time that the man in this long black song succeeds in being *not disturbed*. But he is halfways there. On the other hand, 'She's that far behind.' One too many mornings and a thousand miles behind, to be exact." [In the margin: *To be* inexact, *you mean, you fool. She's right behind him and in front of him and all around him, all of the time. His attempted banishment of her is a hopeless failure! What have you got in your veins—tapwater?*]

There follows a lengthy Ricksian contrast between the words of Dylan's song "Not Dark Yet" and Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." Not, you understand, that our author wants to be taken too seriously. "I don't believe that Keats's poem is *alluded* to in Dylan's song. That is, called into play, so that you'd be failing to respond to something crucial to the song unless you were familiar with, and could call up, Keats's poem." [In the margin: *Oh no, of course, not that.*] After all, the deep connection between Keats's *My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains* and Dylan's *Well, my sense of humanity has gone down the drain* is transparent neither in sense nor rhythm.

It is true that the words "dark," "shadow," and "day"—together with "sleep" and "time," or their cognates—are to be found in both sets of verses. I am quite ready to believe that Dylan had a subliminal memory of being taught the poem in school. But Renata Adler did much better than this, during the 1968 Republican convention that nominated Nixon in Miami. Surveying the sea of placards with their jaunty slogan "Now More Than Ever," she suddenly recognized that it came from verse six of the "Nightingale" ode: *Now more than ever seems it rich to die, / To cease upon the midnight with no pain.*

I think that might have afforded Dylan a smile, and possibly Ricks too. But only one of them has an attitude to sin that is in any sense original. ♦

Cuomo's Lincoln

The former New York governor remakes the sixteenth president in his own image. **BY ANDREW FERGUSON**

I was clicking around *wsws.org*, the "World Socialist Web Site," the other day—and how do *you* kill time at the office?—when I came across a stirring defense of Abraham Lincoln. The *WSWS* is a publication of the International Committee of the Fourth International (both of which seem to have been named by someone at the Department of Redundancy Department). The author of the article on Lincoln was a woman called Shannon Jones. She was upset that many of her fellow socialists blame our sixteenth president for "the delay in the victory of the socialist revolution."

Why Lincoln Matters
Today More than Ever
by Mario Cuomo
Harcourt, 192 pp., $24

Nothing could be further from the truth, Comrade Shannon explained. Rather than impeding the socialist revolution, Lincoln was its forerunner. "They"—meaning these anti-Lincoln socialists—"tear events out of their historical context in order to deny the obvious progressive content of Lincoln's actions," she wrote. That Lincoln was an incipient socialist, if not a completely self-conscious one, seemed as plain to Shannon Jones as the beard on Karl Marx's face, and she looked for the day when a more rigorous understanding of Lincoln's proto-socialist achievement would inspire, as she put it, "a new revolution in property relations." Then we could strive to finish the Lincolnian task of "attacking poverty, oppression and inequality by placing finance and industry under the democratic ownership and control of the working population." With malice toward none, of course.

I enjoyed Jones's essay, if only because her portrait of a Marxist Lincoln was new to me. I knew that groups ranging from the Ku Klux Klan to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, had retroactively tried to enlist Lincoln as a member of their club, but suddenly seeing Old Abe the Dialectician rise up from the Fourth International was especially rewarding. What's next, I wondered? The Vegan Lincoln? Lincoln, the champion of the Tridentine mass? The Rail-splitter's hidden support for the Strategic Defense Initiative?

A day or two later the galley proofs of a new book landed on my desk and I got

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my answer. Here's what's next: *Why Lincoln Matters, Today More than Ever*, by Mario Cuomo.

This is not Mario Cuomo's first book, far from it. As one of those politicians who mysteriously acquire a reputation as a bookish fellow, the former governor of New York has—no, *written* isn't the word. It is more fitting to say that as an intellectual-politician, he has had his name placed in close association with a number of books: two or three wonkish tomes on public policy, a collection of his own ghost-written speeches, and two thick volumes of excerpts from his personal diaries that were, by painful contrast, self-evidently written by him. A children's book, too, rolled off the Cuomo production line a while back.

In fact, this is not even Mario Cuomo's first book on Lincoln. In 1991 he hired the historian Harold Holzer to commission and assemble a collection of scholarly essays by Lincoln enthusiasts in honor of communism's collapse—*nota bene* Shannon Jones—and the volume was released with both Cuomo and Holzer listed as editors. (But only Mario got to be interviewed by Larry King.)

Still, *Why Lincoln Matters* stands alone in the Cuomo corpus. As with the diaries, much of the book shows signs of having been written by its author. Cuomo acknowledges that one chapter was "written with" Holzer, and the hand of the expert collaborator is consistently visible, especially in the citations from Lincoln's *Collected Works* that appear artfully throughout, hung like deadweights to the floating zeppelin of Cuomo's prose. All in all I'd bet this is Mario's favorite of his many books.

The idea for it came to him, he says, at a ceremony marking the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Instead of delivering their own remarks, George Pataki, Michael Bloomberg, and Rudolph Giuliani all chose to read passages from the works of Lincoln. Cuomo marveled at the restraint of his fellow windbags. "That inspired an obvious question," he writes. "If Lincoln can be helpful in providing insight and comfort concerning one of the most significant events in our history that occurred 136 years after his death, why not consult him concerning other serious challenges we face? . . . My hope is that this book brings Lincoln back into the current conversation of American politics where he so firmly belongs."

I'm not sure about that *firmly*. Lincoln is a quicksilver character, always squirting out from beneath the hand that tries to seize him, and this is not through any fault of his own. It's just that he's so big and the "current conversation" is so small. Anyone who tries to read him into it will likely make a hash of things, or at least of Lincoln. Disarmingly, Cuomo himself acknowledges the problem. "For generations," he writes, "politicians have twisted themselves—and Lincoln—out of shape to make it appear that they are standing next to the sixteenth president. Articles and books have been written claiming him as a liberal; others have been written claiming him as a conservative." However: "Conservatives and liberals alike should always resist the impulse to make Lincoln over in their own image."

Having delivered this admonition, the author then strides boldly onward, ignoring it entirely. No reader will be surprised that Mario Cuomo, in surveying the span of Lincoln's life and absorbing the vast expanse of Lincoln's writing, has discovered that Mario Cuomo and Abraham Lincoln have one hell of a lot in common. The discovery has been humbly made, and for the most part Cuomo wants us to understand that in the firm of Lincoln & Cuomo, he's happy to assume the role of junior partner. Even so, *Why Lincoln Matters* seems as much about its author as about its subject. After the introduction, Cuomo takes us on a *tour d'horizon* of "today's challenges." (*Challenges* has always been one of his favorite words; more dramatic than *problems*, more abstract than *difficulties*, more Kennedyesque than *issues*, it is used by him as a synonym for all three.) Page after page floats by before the reader remembers that the book was supposed to be about Abraham Lincoln. Of Cuomo, however, we get a lot, and also a lot—say, here's a surprise—of George W. Bush.

Around page fifty or so, Lincoln makes a reappearance, and it turns out that Bush has very little in common with him, unlike some other former governors I could name. As Cuomo reckons them here, the differences between Bush and Lincoln are stark, though what Cuomo sees as contradictions will appear to a less partisan eye as non sequiturs tossed up by a not-terribly-careful history buff. Bush, Cuomo notes, has proposed faith-based initiatives; Lincoln, by contrast, "was the first commander in chief to commission non-Christian military chaplains." Bush favors tax cuts; Lincoln wanted to preserve a government that "afforded all an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life." Bush invaded Iraq; Lincoln refused to attack England as a way of forestalling Southern secession. Indeed, Cuomo announces, "Lincoln would have urged President Bush to continue, at least for a while longer, the diplomacy needed to create a coalition with the United Nations." Except he's dead.

Yet he speaks still, from beyond the grave. Occasionally, Cuomo's invidious use of history is not merely crafty, in the way polemical tricks often are. It can be genuinely repulsive. He reasons that because Lincoln opposed the Mexican-American war, which began in 1848, he would have opposed the invasion of Iraq, which began in 2003. "Lincoln's disinclination to go to war unless

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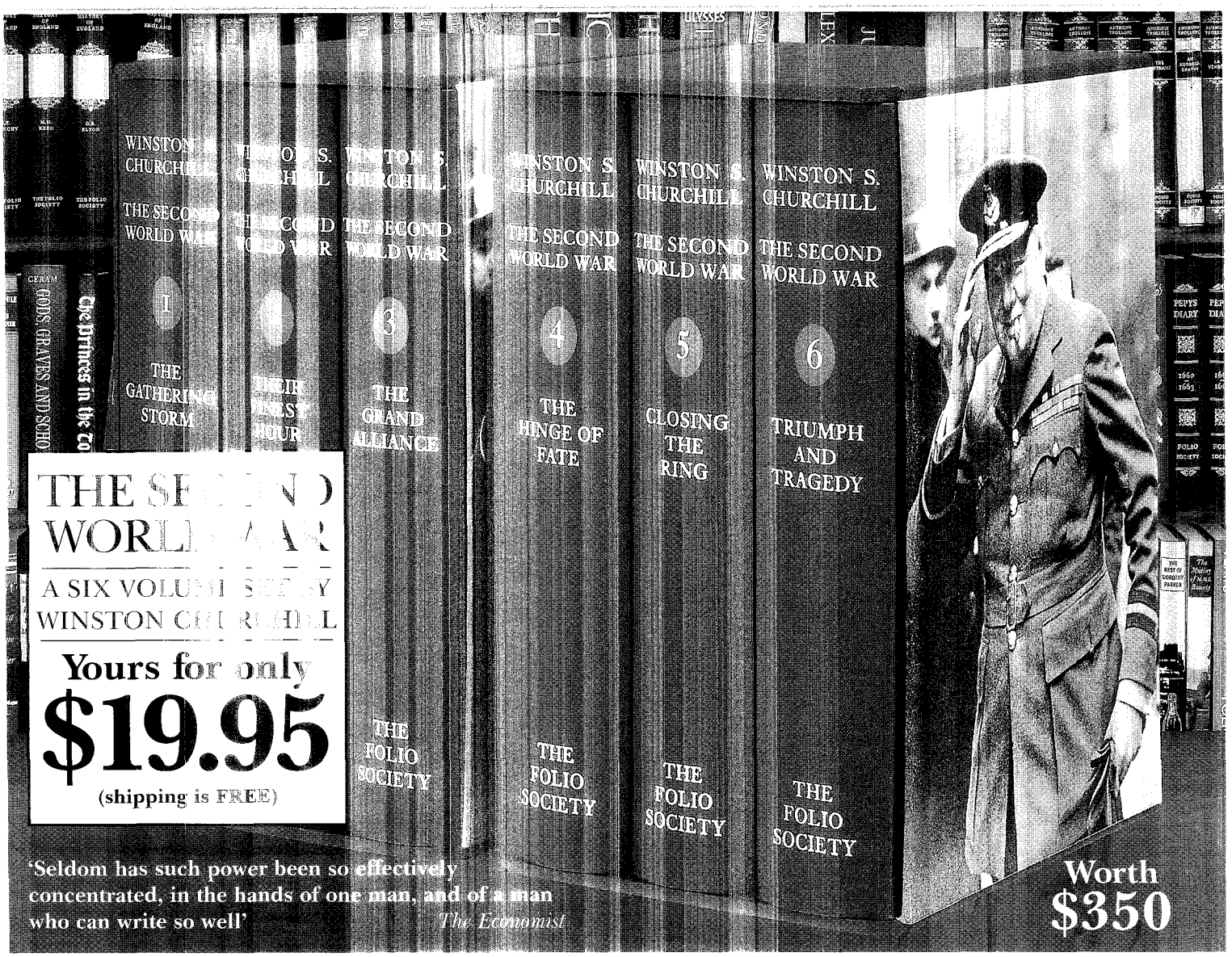

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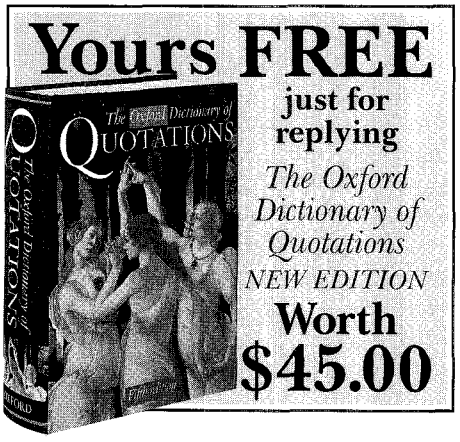

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absolutely unavoidable made the notion of preemptory war abhorrent," Cuomo writes. But in an eerie coincidence, another politician of Lincoln's era *did* favor preemptory war. Cuomo quotes Jefferson Davis on the decision to fire on Fort Sumter: "To have awaited further strengthening of their position, with hostile purpose now declared, would have been as unwise as it would be to hesitate to strike down the arm of the assailant who levels a deadly weapon at one's breast, until he has actually fired."

Cuomo concludes: "But Lincoln's keen mind, inveterate caution, and strong aversion to violence would have insisted on inarguable proof. In the end, it is fair to say that President Bush settled for much less than that and so did Jefferson Davis." Bush had his war, just as Davis had his. And note the phrase, "it is fair to say." This Cuomo is a mean little man.

No one could make Abraham Lincoln a contemporary liberal without distorting either 2004's liberalism or 1860's Lincoln, and so the distortions of *Why Lincoln Matters* show up everywhere, in large matters and small. Cuomo says that "with the prescience that was another of his great gifts, Lincoln made clear that the need for government would grow as the people's interactions grew more intense," but even the scholarly Holzer, frantically thumbing his Lincoln books in the back room, can't find a quotation to support this assertion. (Conservatives have had as much trouble trying to make Lincoln a small-government man—it is fair to say.) Lincoln would have opposed "corporate welfare," Cuomo says, though this would be news to the president who signed the Pacific Railway Act of 1862, one of the most expensive government giveaways in history. Cuomo says Lincoln, like Cuomo, was a "passionate" advocate of "inclusion" and "diversity." "At the heart of his struggle and his yearning," he writes, "was always the passion to make room for the outsider and the insistence upon a commitment to respect the idea of equality by fighting for inclusion. Diversity, he said, was not a matter of discord but a bond of union."

Cuomo prints this passage of his twice, once on page ten and then again on page ninety-six, for reasons unknown; he must think it really sings, or maybe he just forgot. In any case, you'll notice that he is deploying the words *inclusion* and *diversity* in their contemporary sense, as the cant phrases of identity politics. It should go without saying, but probably doesn't, that Lincoln didn't understand *inclusion* and *diversity* in this way. Identity politics—like raising the minimum wage, tightening environmental laws, subsidizing stem-cell research, or any number of policies Cuomo would force upon him—simply didn't occur to him. At the risk of pedantry, I'll point out that Lincoln scarcely used this "language of inclusion" at all. The *Collected Works* contains one use by Lincoln of the word *inclusion*, five of *diversity*, and then only in two senses: diversity of opinion, and the diversity of local governmental arrangements that federalism encourages (not one of Mario Cuomo's pet causes). Next to Mario, Shannon Jones begins to appear as a model of historical modesty.

Every once in a while, junior partner Cuomo hitches up his trousers and walks right into Old Man Lincoln's office and gives him what fer. It's not pretty but it has to be done. These are revealing moments. There are the unhappy matters of Lincoln's many recorded racist remarks and his problematic suspension of various civil rights during the Civil War. "Notwithstanding Lincoln's clever attempts at exculpation," Cuomo writes, "I still wish the great Lincoln had stood by the Constitution despite the strong temptation not to. . . . His transgressions during the war were political heresy, a heresy that made it easier for later presidents, including FDR and George W. Bush, to put aside the law for convenience sake." Ah, Bush. Quickly Cuomo regains the firmer ground. It may be that President Lincoln shuttered newspapers, threatened the arrest of an entire state legislature, deported a troublesome political opponent, and suspended the writ of habeas corpus. But: "President Bush's excesses are worse than even the serious misappropriations of power by Lincoln."

In such moments, the most unattractive quality of Cuomo's historicism comes plainly into view. Cuomo may be blasting Bush, but he is patronizing Lincoln. How do you condescend to such a personage? It could be possible for Cuomo only if Lincoln isn't real to him, except as a rhetorical cudgel. Lost in the solipsism of the modern polemicist—you can easily imagine the book serving as the basis for a special episode of the *O'Reilly Factor*—Cuomo can't come to terms with either the figure of history or the man of myth. When Lincoln seems to agree with him, Cuomo lapses into sentimentality, misty-eyed at the thought that a man so like himself could have once been president; when Lincoln's record is deficient, Cuomo turns into a scold, snarling at his own political opponents. Whichever way the analysis swings, it's all about Mario. Lincoln himself remains untouched.

But let's hop off this train. (We've probably stayed on too long as it is.)

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Let's assume for the moment that Cuomo has written this terrible book in good faith and not as an exercise in political opportunism; it's not a safe assumption, but let's make it anyway and, in closing, briefly take his argument seriously, if only because it so well reflects how history and Lincoln are commonly used in an age and a country so disdainful of history.

If there's a single confusion in *Why Lincoln Matters* that underlies the others, it is Cuomo's misuse of Lincoln's idea of equality. Cuomo writes of equality as a goal or a dream, an unfinished program or a will-o'-the-wisp, beckoning us to ever-more ingenious attempts at reshaping the world. Lincoln took equality to be simply a fact. Human equality is built into creation; it is the premise of self-government, not its end. And the purpose of politics and government is to encourage the flourishing of what is already the case.

The distinction between these two ways of looking at the American creed is crucial and, nowadays, unexpectedly pertinent. Cuomo's idea of equality requires endless schemes to force upon the country an equality of condition—let's say, to take one of Cuomo's recurring examples, a government-administered system of universal health care. Lincoln's idea of equality, on the other hand, though nobler than Cuomo's, is in practice more modest. Universal health care run by the government may or may not be a good idea; nearly two centuries after his birth, no one can say how Lincoln, a fleet and wily politician, would address the question if he faced it today. But the question itself, like most political questions, is prudential, not a matter of fundamental principle—and it draws no particular answer from the life or work of Lincoln. You can't enlist him in a cause so small.

As a scriptural authority, in other words, Lincoln offers wide latitude. He comes to us as the best kind of hero, an exemplar looming over our history even as he throws us back on our own resources, mindful of the overspreading principles he preserved and made clear.

This is why Lincoln matters, and will for as long as the country lasts. He is much bigger than Mario Cuomo knows. ♦

The Muse of Malaise

A quarter century after his presidency, Jimmy Carter stays his course. **BY NOEMIE EMERY**

During the funeral ceremonies for President Reagan, few people mentioned the fortieth president without paying tribute to the job he did in dispelling the national mood that he met at the start of his mission: the enervation and horror, the malaise and bad feeling, the gloom and despair. The person most representative of this mood was carefully not mentioned: James Earl Carter. What was also not mentioned was that Carter was key to the legend of Reagan, symbolizing the darkness in which Reagan shone brighter, the ashes from which he would rise.

The Real Jimmy Carter
How Our Worst Ex-President Undermines American Foreign Policy, Coddles Dictators, and Created the Party of Clinton and Kerry
by Steven F. Hayward
Regnery, 272 pp., $27.95

Carter is surely one of the worst failures in the history of the American presidency, but he is a failure of a special sort: He did not overreach, as did Lyndon Johnson, or seek to deceive, as did Richard Nixon. Rather, like Herbert Hoover, he seems a well-meaning sort overcome by reality. But while Hoover was blindsided by the depression, Carter failed on a broad range of matters and faced few crises he didn't first bring on himself. Most presidents, even the good ones (sometimes especially even the good ones) leave behind a mixed record of big wins and big errors, but with Carter, the darkness seems everywhere: He is all Bay of Pigs and no Missile Crisis, all Iran-contra and no "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

PBS, whose *American Experience* series on the presidents has done some fascinating things with such novelistic lives as those of Reagan, Kennedy, Nixon, Johnson, and both the Roosevelts, seemed (in a two-part series first aired two years ago and now reappearing) at a loss for how to handle this long dirge-like story, and, to its credit, the program did not flinch from portraying his actual presidency as the total disaster it was. In the end, however, it made a stab in the direction of uplift by portraying his post-presidency as a heart-warming success, the tale of a man who turned defeat in the cruel world of power into a lifetime of unselfish service.

This is the conceit ripped into shreds by Steven F. Hayward in his new book, *The Real Jimmy Carter*, which maintains that in his current carnation Carter is as wrongheaded and hapless as ever, that he has learned nothing at all from history, and, in his new guise as a globe-trotting statesman, is reprising his role as a bringer of chaos, this time on the stage of the world.

Using a process of selective exclusion, PBS gives Carter credit for hammering away at Habitat for Humanity and raising money to fight diseases in Africa. Hayward concedes this, but then paints a less pleasant picture: Carter the ex-president has been more destructive than Carter the president, and, if possible, still more annoying, undermining later presidents with the ruthless ambition that marked his career.

Carter began, in the contentious post-civil-rights era in the deep South, by beating Carl Sanders in the 1970 race for governor of Georgia, by running as a segregationist, at least by implication: portraying himself as a "redneck" and cultivating the endorsement of Lester Maddox. Once elected, he used his inaugural speech to stun both the state and the nation by declaring that the time for segregation was over, and disowning, in effect, his prior campaign. It may have

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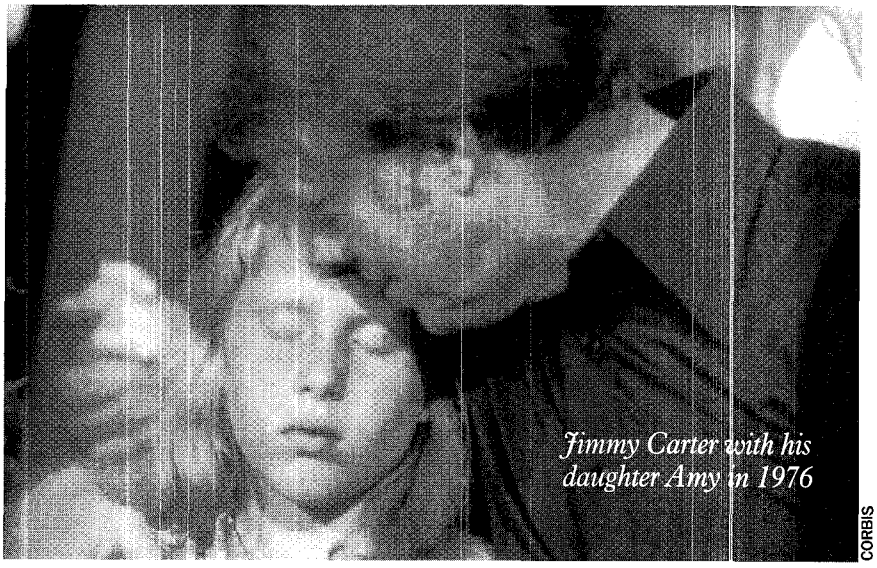
distressed his original voters (whom he no longer needed), but it was a huge hit with the national press, which may have been his target, and overnight it made him a red-hot political property. *Time* magazine, which had planned a general story on the new class of southern governors, suddenly came out instead with a story on Carter—with a cover that made him resemble John Kennedy.

Hayward credits Carter with transforming the way men now run for president (he was the man who gave us the Iowa caucus) and with perfecting the role of the outsider-insurgent which since then has dominated national politics. Before Carter was elected, presidential contenders had been creatures of Washington: Nixon, Kennedy, Johnson, Goldwater, McGovern, and Humphrey all had been senators, and Ford was a longtime House fixture. Three of Carter's successors—Reagan, Clinton, and the current Bush—were instead governors who ran against Washington (while, of course, longing to get there).

Carter also had the sense to craft himself a profile as a religious, moral, culturally conservative moderate. He suggested that welfare should be connected to a work incentive, that power in some ways should be decentralized, and that people should take more responsibility for their own lives. "Reagan could hardly have put it differently," Hayward tells us, and sometimes he didn't. Both Carter and Reagan began their campaigns by quoting the same verse from the Bible.

If Carter had governed with the skill he campaigned, PBS might have had yet another inspiring story. Alas, he did not. Frequently, the ability to run a successful campaign presages some talents at governing, but Carter would prove a catastrophe. As party leader, he inspired both a challenge from the left by Ted Kennedy and a revolt from the right among Scoop Jackson Democrats, who in 1980 would find a soulmate in Reagan and a permanent home in the Republican party. "I never understood how Carter's political mind worked," his vice president remarked. "Everything [Carter] touches turns to ashes," the *New Republic* added.



Jimmy Carter with his daughter Amy in 1976

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As a domestic manager, his crowning achievement was to take the old liberal creed of big government and hitch it to the new liberal creed of "limits to growth" and create incoherence. "We have learned that 'more' is not necessarily 'better,' and that even our great nation has its recognized limits," he scolded, taking on two hundred years of the American temperament. Thus he tried to damp down the consumption machine that drives the economy, while balking at the tax cuts that might have spurred on investment. The result was stagflation, a condition economists had once thought impossible, of soaring inflation and no growth in jobs. Interest rates soared, and Carter's approval ratings sank into the thirties. For this he blamed the American people, for being too immature to realize the good times were over for good.

Carter the candidate owed at least some of his votes to his prior career as a career naval officer, where he was a disciple of Admiral Hyman Rickover, a notoriously hard-edged military martinet who made Donald Rumsfeld seem cuddly. Once in office, however, the ex-naval officer infused the office with liberal guilt. Gerald Ford may have lost the election in the one debate in which he insisted the Soviet Union no longer controlled Poland, but Carter behaved as if this were truly the case. In an address at Notre Dame on May 22, 1977, he denounced the "inordinate fear of communism" that had produced the containment theory that had kept the peace for three decades. In his first month in office he announced his intention to withdraw nuclear weapons and ground troops from South Korea, cut six billion dollars from the defense budget, cancel development of the Trident nuclear submarine, and defer construction of the neutron bomb.

All of these proposals were made unilaterally, with no effort to induce concessions by the other side. Cyrus Vance, Carter's first secretary of state, was described by Democrat Morris Abrams as the closest thing to a pure pacifist since William Jennings Bryan, and by Defense Secretary Harold Brown as a man who believed the use of force was always mistaken. Paul Warnke, Carter's chief arms-control negotiator, held views described by George Will as "engagingly childlike"—believing that if we disarmed, the Soviet Union would follow us. Early on, the centrist Committee for a Democratic Majority sent Carter a list of moderates, Jeane Kirkpatrick among them, for consideration for appointment for foreign policy posts. Of fifty-three names, just one was appointed, to a minor trade post.

Even Carter's much vaunted human-rights effort, which gave some people hope he would use it as a moral weapon against the Soviet Union, quickly lost much of its power and luster when it became evident that he intended to use it less against Communists than against the more marginal despots in the non-Communist orbit. Thus he embraced Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev at the 1979 arms-control summit and assured an assemblage of East Europeans that "the old ideological labels have lost their meaning," even as they remained under the Soviet boot. In Carter's State Department, the Sandinistas were thought to be moderates and

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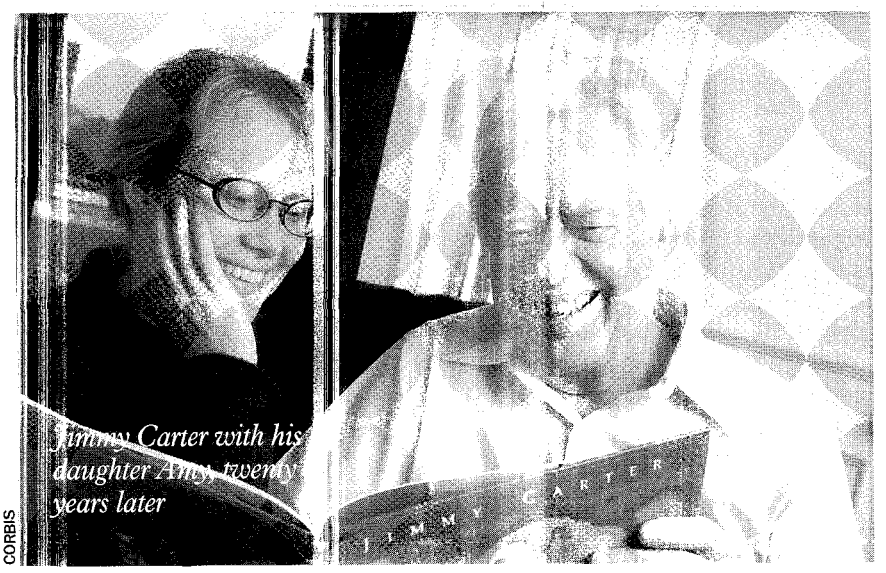

Jimmy Carter with his daughter Amy twenty years later

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the Ayatollah Khomeini a saintlike figure surrounded by "moderate, progressive individuals" with a noticeable "concern for human rights."

Carter's meddling in Central America led to a civil war that killed 40,000 people, left 100,000 homeless, and installed a Soviet-supported totalitarian government that for ten years was a source of unrest in the region. On November 4, 1979, a group of Khomeini's progressive moderates stormed the embassy in Tehran and held Americans hostage for the next fourteen months. The regime that replaced the disposed shah became a major backer of the fundamentalist terrorist movement. As a reward for his efforts to wind down the arms race, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan—astounding the president, who nonetheless told a group of moderate Democrats that current events would do nothing to alter his policies. Carter had done more in three years to weaken the country and destabilize the world than all the other presidents since the Cold War had started. It was Senator Moynihan who gave him his epitaph: "Unable to distinguish between our friends and our enemies, he has adopted our enemies' view of the world."

Carter kept breaking haplessness records, at the rate of one every two or three months. In April 1980, an attempt to rescue the hostages ended when three of eight helicopters developed mechanical problems, one killing eight soldiers when it crashed. An Israeli officer delivered the verdict: "the planning and execution were too incompetent to believe." In June, Carter's failures in the Middle East and in economic and energy policies coalesced in a gasoline shortage that caused long lines and panic at the pumps. There was a two-day riot at a Pennsylvania gas station; over the July 4 weekend, 90 percent of the stations in the New York City area were closed.

Carter flew off to an energy summit where he found no relief and came back to the classic Carterian moment: the flight to Camp David, followed by the purge of the cabinet and the world-famous speech on "malaise." Among the millions who were less than impressed was Ronald Reagan, then running against him. Vice President Mondale, who was so enraged he considered resigning, warned Carter: "You can't castigate the American people, or they will turn you off once and for all." And so they did. No one was surprised when Carter was attacked by a "killer rabbit" in Georgia, or when Reagan finished him off in November in a landslide so sweeping that the networks announced it only minutes after the first polls had closed.

Herbert Hoover accepted the verdict of history when he lost in 1932 to Franklin Roosevelt, keeping a profile so low he was all but invisible. Carter instead reacted as if he had retired by choice with the thanks of the nation. He did some good work for general charities, and he was useful at least twice in his international forays: in Panama in 1986 when he faced Noreiga, and unexpectedly in 2002 in Cuba when he went against type to tell Castro off. He also acquired a lengthy record of criticizing, weakening, and undercutting a series of American presidents.

He publicly attacked Reagan's morals and competence. In 1990 and 1991, as George Bush was assembling the Gulf War coalition, Carter wrote secretly to Margaret Thatcher, François Mitterand, Mikhail Gorbachev, and a dozen others, asking the U.N. Security Council not to back Bush. (Bush only found out what had happened when a stunned Brian Mulroney called Dick Cheney up to complain.) Bill Clinton soured on the ex-president after Carter's trip in 1994 to North Korea, in which he publicly embraced the dictator Kim Il Sung and negotiated a wholly worthless treaty banning production of nuclear weapons, which that country proceeded to break.

Carter of course made the same vehement objections to George W. Bush's war on terror as he had made to his father's war in the Gulf ten years earlier, going so far as to happily accept an award from the Nobel Prize committee that was given to him solely for the purpose of giving a black eye to America. "It should be interpreted as a criticism of the line that the current administration has taken," the Nobel committee chairman said helpfully, "a kick in the leg to all those that follow the same line as the U.S." Carter's "Lone Ranger work has taken him dangerously close to the neighborhood of what we used to call treason," Lance Morrow wrote in *Time*. As Hayward notes, Carter's successors have done far more than he did for human rights and for the nation's security. Iran and Nicaragua, the twin targets of his attention as president, turned on his watch into hell holes. And we can safely say that had he been reelected, or had his way afterward, the Soviet Union might still be in existence, and the oil fields of Kuwait and possibly Saudi Arabia might be in the hands of Iraq.

Nonetheless, Carter is a historic figure, one of the hinges on which history swings. No man has done more than he to create and empower the modern Republican party, which, when he became president, seemed down for the count. If he had been the man he seemed when he was running for president—an integrationist but a social conservative, a small businessman and ex-naval officer, a Rickover protégé with a keen sense of power—he might have recreated the party of Truman and Kennedy. As it was, his incompetence

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and his blundering, coming after McGovern's extremism and the implosions of Humphrey and Johnson, was the last straw for a great many Democrats, who decided the chances they were willing to give to their party had more or less run their course. Under his goading, millions who had never believed they could vote for a Republican president crossed over to vote for an ex-movie actor.

Some would later cross back, but they were never anchored quite so securely as they had been, and they remained available to a plausible Republican candidate as they had not been before. The end of the Democrats as the national majority begins with Carter—as does the end of liberalism as the national creed. A lot has been written about the maturation of the conservative movement from Goldwater to the present day, but this of course is only one half of the story. It was not enough for the Republicans to become more poised and accessible. The Democrats had to collapse, freeing millions of voters to look at an alternative. No one symbolized this collapse more than did Jimmy Carter, victim of rabbits and America's muse of malaise. ♦

Cherchez les Femmes

The American tradition of mystery novels by women.

BY JON L. BREEN

Revisionist history sometimes becomes conventional wisdom. Consider this proposition, now universally accepted as truth: *While British women long ruled the mystery roost, their American sisters were a downtrodden underclass in a genre dominated by bullying hard-boiled males.* Or try this, which most of those who comment on mystery fiction seem to believe: *American women pioneers in the development of the detective novel have been ignored or marginalized by mostly masculine historians and scholars.* Or this: *Strong, self-sufficient non-spinster female detectives were unknown in fiction before the 1970s.* Or, finally, this: *Pulp fiction is some kind of prestigious and mysterious old boys' club.*

As it happens, all of these are false.

The Dead Letter & The Figure Eight
by Metta Fuller Victor
Duke University Press, 388 pp., $21.95

That Affair Next Door & Lost Man's Lane
by Anna Katharine Green
Duke University Press, 388 pp., $21.95

Painted for the Kill
by Lucy Cores
Rue Morgue, 189 pp., $14.95

Corpse de Ballet
by Lucy Cores
Rue Morgue, 289 pp., $14.95

In a Lonely Place
by Dorothy B. Hughes
Feminist Press, 250 pp., $14.95

The Blackbirder
by Dorothy B. Hughes
Feminist Press, 288 pp., $14.95

But the truth doesn't seem to fit the story that people want to tell about the field of crime fiction, and so the facts seem to go out the window. Introducing one of two recent omnibus volumes by the American detective novel's two most important nineteenth-century pioneers, Catherine Ross Nickerson asserts that most historians of the detective story begin with the American Edgar Allan Poe but "go on to trace the development of the detective novel in the work of British writers . . . [and] tend to return to the American scene only with the arrival of the hard-boiled style in the 1920s."

While one of her subjects, Metta Fuller Victor (1831-1885), has only recently been recognized for her historic role, the other, Anna Katharine Green (1846-1935), has long been celebrated for her seminal status and renders the sweeping statement inaccurate.

Victor, who wrote her two early novels under the name "Seeley Regester," genuinely does deserve credit as the first American detective novelist—but with an asterisk. *The Dead Letter* (1867) begins with Richard Redfield, a postal employee in Washington, finding a cryptic letter dated two years earlier that sheds light on a mystery that has virtually destroyed his life. By opening the story with the finding of the letter before introducing a flashback to the events leading up to it, Victor gives the reader the illusion of a story set in motion by an incredible coincidence (fictionally acceptable) rather than resolved by one (fictionally unacceptable).

Two years before, Redfield was a student in the offices of lawyer John Argyll and in love with his benefactor's daughter Eleanor, whose fiancé Henry Moreland is found stabbed to death while en route to the Argyll home. The novel has enough of the essential elements to qualify as a detective story. Burton, the Great Detective figure, introduced as taciturn but increasingly garrulous as the story goes on, "chooses such cases as demand . . . the benefit of his rare powers." The final revelation of the criminal (which can hardly have surprised the readers of its time much more than it will today's) comes in a gathering of the suspects. The novel keeps a consistent focus on the case, apart from romantic interludes. But in place of real detection, Victor resorts to parlor tricks and supernatural visions. When Burton makes Sherlock Holmes-like deductions from the handwriting of a letter, the reader must take his graphological acuity on faith, since no explanations are given. Some of Burton's detection comes via the gifts of his clairvoyant eleven-year-old daughter.

Though hard sledding for a reader of today, the novel is well enough written to show the author was good in her time, and the social and domestic details are instructive. The Irish servant class is stereotyped as superstitious and over-emotional, with their dialect presented in tiresome phonetic transcription. Modern marvels include train travel and photography to aid identification. A long sea voyage is needed to travel to California to track

Author of Kill the Umpire: The Calls of Ed Gorgon, *Jon L. Breen is winner of two Edgar awards.*

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down a clue. The publisher's back-cover blurb claims "a background of post-Civil War politics," but nothing of the kind appears—indeed, the action takes place in the late 1850s, before the Civil War.

The Figure Eight (1869) includes the same brand of stock characters as its predecessor—the gallant but misunderstood narrator, his kind elderly benefactor, an evil rival in love, and women of beauty, innocence, and nobility—but it is a more successful novel. It begins with a body in the library: the uncle of narrator Joe Meredith, a country doctor who had recently returned from California with $60,000 in gold bars intended to pay off a mortgage and retire from medical practice. The victim, poisoned by prussic acid in a glass of port, leaves a dying message: a scribble that includes the figure eight of the title. The gold has disappeared, and the narrator is accused of the crime. The characters, including a Mrs. Danvers-like governess and the victim's young Cuban wife, are more complex and less predictable than those in *The Dead Letter*, but the detection is no more advanced. Don't expect any great revelation on the meaning of that dying message. The novel exemplifies the mystery as social history, including the hero's resolve during his exile on the western frontier to make a killing in real estate.

For many years, before scholars unearthed Victor's work, Anna Katharine Green was regarded as the first woman to write a detective novel—indeed, as the first American mystery novelist of either sex. Her 1878 novel *The Leavenworth Case* has been almost universally recognized as a milestone, and all the early, mostly male historians of the form acknowledged her pioneering status. The two novels chosen for reprint exemplify one of Green's many innovations: the spinster sleuth, later to be explored by writers as various as Mary Roberts Rinehart, Agatha Christie, and Stuart Palmer.

In *That Affair Next Door* (1897), wealthy Manhattan resident Amelia Butterworth becomes suspicious late one evening when she sees a man take a young woman into the seemingly closed house next door and shortly leave without her. When the woman's body is found crushed under a heavy cabinet, Amelia ponders the eternal question of mystery fiction: Was it accident, suicide, or murder? A semicomic figure who reveals herself more than she intends in her first-person narrative, Amelia enthusiastically probes the complicated relationships of her neighbors and offers help to Ebenezer Gryce, the elderly policeman of earlier Green novels. The novel is leisurely paced but not padded, and the detecting rivalry of amateur and professional is humorously and sensitively managed. Much of its careful plotting and attention to detail would be at home in a formal detective novel of decades later, though the final solution comes from a witness with an explanation anticipated by neither Gryce nor Butterworth. The surprise killer, though probably anticipated by latter-day readers, must have been a sensation in 1897.

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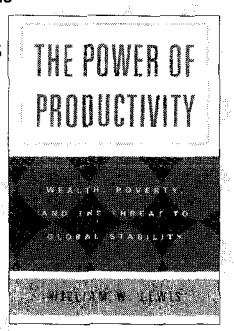

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www.press.uchicago.edu

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Mary Roberts Rinehart

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Amelia gradually wins Gryce's grudging respect, to the extent of becoming involved at his invitation in *Lost Man's Lane* (1898), about a series of broad-daylight disappearances in a New York mountain village. With mysterious noises in a houseful of secrets and the legend of a phantom coach, the novel is much more in the gothic tradition than the superior *That Affair Next Door*. A frankly preposterous story, with a broadly painted least-suspected-person culprit and at one point a highly unlikely disguise for Gryce, it is a lesser book than its predecessor, though not devoid of interest.

Historical importance apart, has Green become merely a museum piece? Some 1940s commentators, including Howard Haycraft and Ellery Queen, would have said so on the basis of her florid Victorian style. But perhaps they were too close in time to appreciate what then was merely out of fashion. On the basis of these two novels, Green can be accessible and rewarding today to the right reader.

In the early years of the twentieth century, American women ceded none of their preeminence. Green continued producing into the 1920s and by the beginning of World War I had been joined by the hugely successful Mary Roberts Rinehart, who would remain a perennial bestseller into the 1950s, and the less well-remembered (but celebrated in her time) Carolyn Wells, among other female American detective novelists. By the 1930s, such writers as Leslie Ford, Mignon G. Eberhart, Elizabeth Sanxay Holding, and Phoebe Atwood Taylor had launched long and successful careers. In the 1940s came Craig Rice, Margaret Millar, Dorothy Salisbury Davis, Charlotte Armstrong, and Helen McCloy, among many others.

The prominence of women was not limited to the writers. Many, perhaps most, of the prominent mystery editors at mid-century were female: Lee Wright, Marie F. Rodell, Joan Kahn, Isabelle Taylor, Margaret Norton. By the early 1950s, women occupied the mystery reviewing chairs of major newspapers and magazines: Avis de Voto, Lenore Glen Offord, Dorothy B. Hughes, Frances Crane. The major tastemaker was a man—the *New York Times* Book Review's Anthony Boucher—but he loved books by women.

And what about the characters these women wrote about? Strong independent women were nonstarters in sleuthing roles until the private eyes, policewomen, pathologists, and trouble-prone amateurs of the 1970s and 1980s, right? Wrong. Rue Morgue Press, Tom and Enid Schantz's small Colorado publishing firm, has reprinted several writers of the 1940s who put the lie to such nonsense, most recently two novels by Lucy Cores.

Cores's *Painted for the Kill* (1943) introduces Toni Ney, physical trainer and jujitsu instructor at a posh Manhattan salon that will remind you of the setting for Claire Boothe Luce's *The Women*. When a French movie star is murdered during a mudpack treatment, Toni turns amateur sleuth, and her relationship with police detective Torrent parallels that of Butterworth and Gryce half a century earlier. The novel has all the elements of a present-day cozy mystery—specialized background, amateur sleuth with interesting job and independent nature, romantic misunderstandings, humor, suspense set-pieces, even a cat—but is miles better than most of today's product, mainly because of a better sense of pace, a lack of tangential soap-opera complications, and some genuinely clued detection. *Corpse de Ballet* (1944), with Toni working as a reporter covering a ballet production, is not quite as good, partly because of a tiresome romantic subplot, but it is still well written and deceptively plotted.

Macho resentment over women in the workforce is one motivation for the serial strangler who stalks postwar Los Angeles in the 1947 novel *In a Lonely Place* by Dorothy B. Hughes, one of the biggest names in mid-twentieth-century crime fiction, both as reviewer and novelist. Her earlier *The Blackbirder* (1943) is a pursuit novel with a vivid visual sense and a strong sense of faceless menace, with details of what is going on only gradually revealed. Juliet Marlebone, the American-born daughter of a naturalized French father, has fled wartime Europe with unofficial help. Following the murder in New York of a German acquaintance, she flees to Santa Fe in search of the shadowy title character, an illegal transporter of refugees from Mexico. In the course of her travels, several locales are economically captured, along with the details of wartime conditions on the home front.

The reprinting of these two excellent novels by Feminist Press is most welcome, but the editors do Hughes an unintentional disservice by the series title, "Femmes Fatales: Women Write Pulp." By any sensible definition, Hughes was not a pulp writer. "Pulp

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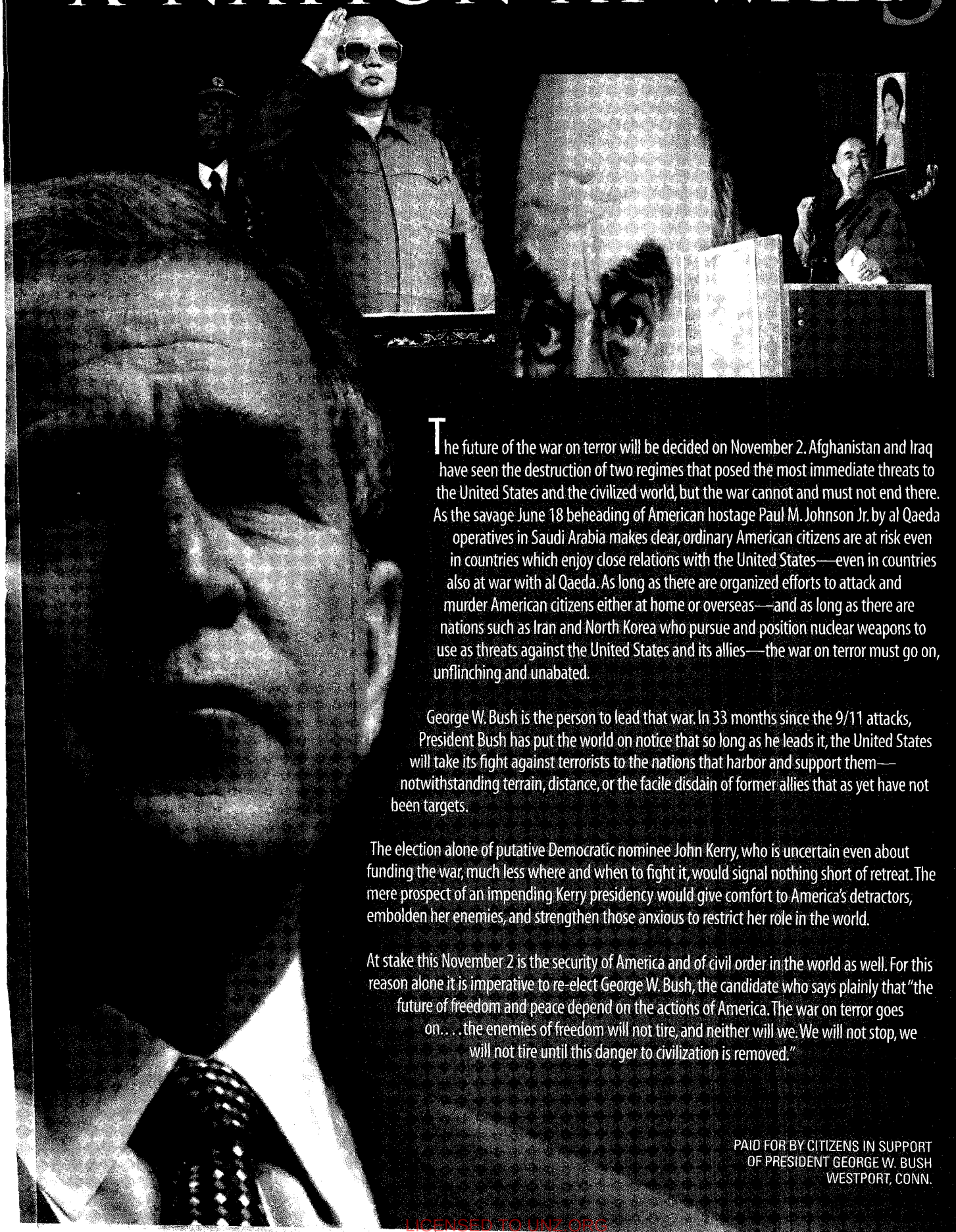
A NATION AT WAR.3



The future of the war on terror will be decided on November 2. Afghanistan and Iraq have seen the destruction of two regimes that posed the most immediate threats to the United States and the civilized world, but the war cannot and must not end there. As the savage June 18 beheading of American hostage Paul M. Johnson Jr. by al Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia makes clear, ordinary American citizens are at risk even in countries which enjoy close relations with the United States—even in countries also at war with al Qaeda. As long as there are organized efforts to attack and murder American citizens either at home or overseas—and as long as there are nations such as Iran and North Korea who pursue and position nuclear weapons to use as threats against the United States and its allies—the war on terror must go on, unflinching and unabated.

George W. Bush is the person to lead that war. In 33 months since the 9/11 attacks, President Bush has put the world on notice that so long as he leads it, the United States will take its fight against terrorists to the nations that harbor and support them—notwithstanding terrain, distance, or the facile disdain of former allies that as yet have not been targets.

The election alone of putative Democratic nominee John Kerry, who is uncertain even about funding the war, much less where and when to fight it, would signal nothing short of retreat. The mere prospect of an impending Kerry presidency would give comfort to America's detractors, embolden her enemies, and strengthen those anxious to restrict her role in the world.

At stake this November 2 is the security of America and of civil order in the world as well. For this reason alone it is imperative to re-elect George W. Bush, the candidate who says plainly that "the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. The war on terror goes on.... the enemies of freedom will not tire, and neither will we. We will not stop, we will not tire until this danger to civilization is removed."

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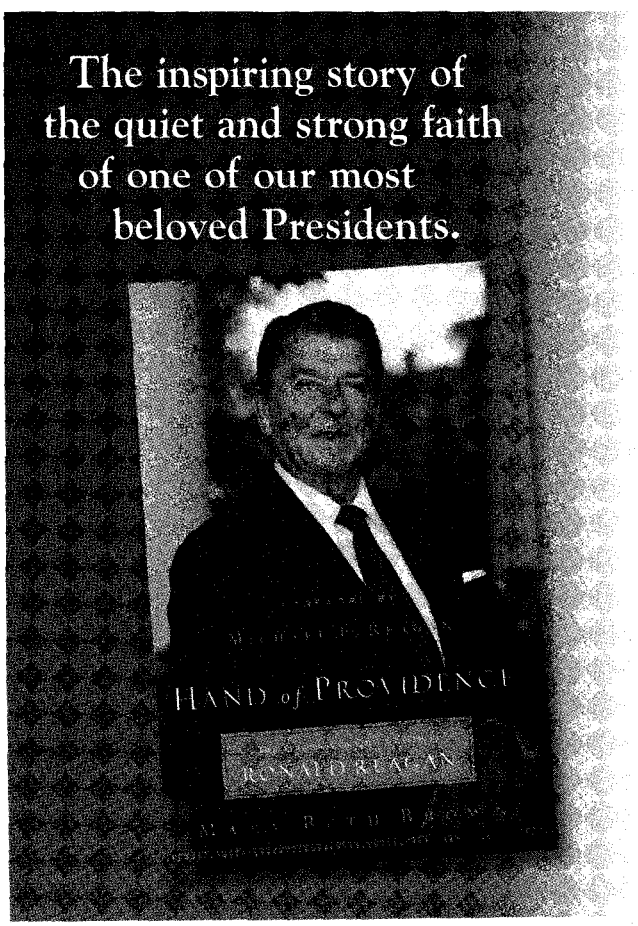
fiction" refers to material written for the pulp-paper magazines that flourished from the 1920s to the 1940s and died out in the 1950s. Some commentators, reasonably enough, extend the term to include material written for the digest-sized fiction magazines and paperback-original publishers that took the place of the pulps in the marketplace—or as much of the marketplace as the rise of television left for them. For purposes of the Feminist Press series, though, pulp seems to be a synonym for mass-market paperback, which leads the editors and their consulting scholars into a morass of misunderstanding, sweeping generalizations, and fuzzy thinking.

For example, the editors claim in their overall introduction, "authorial name and persona were rarely linked to real-life identity." Pseudonyms were widespread in pulp magazine and paperback staples like mysteries, science fiction, and westerns, but they were not the norm. In her afterword to *The Blackbirder*, Amy Villarejo calls the early Pocket Books "among the first pulp novels." Pocket Books, one recalls, specialized in cheap reprints of classics. If Shakespeare, Emily Brontë, P.G. Wodehouse, Edgar Allan Poe, and Jane Austen are now pulp writers, the designation has lost all meaning.

In fact, pulp writer is not a dishonorable label. Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler came out of the pulps, as did many other distinguished writers of popular fiction in various genres. But most pulp fiction, in its strictest definition, was disposable product, written fast for low rates of pay, without the care or the literary ambition of writings for slick magazines or for book publication. It's no accident that most anthologies of pulp fiction draw on the more respectable and better-edited latter-day digests for most of their material rather than the real pulps. Even in those early pulps, there were women writers—notably Leigh Brackett, who would become a prominent screenwriter best known for her work on *The Big Sleep* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Regardless, "pulp writer" simply will not do as a description of Dorothy B. Hughes. Her first book was a volume of poetry from Yale University Press, her novels were written for the hardcover book market from the beginning, she was inspired to fiction writing by the very un-pulpish Eric Ambler, and she received respectful reviews from distinguished publications throughout her career.

Quibbles about terminology aside, what remains is the work, and it is good to have all these books available to readers. And there are many other unjustly neglected women deserving revival: the wonderful Charlotte Armstrong, for just one example. But there are many men who deserve reprinting as well. There simply isn't any truth in the story that women writers are especially ignored by readers and historians of mystery fiction. Time and forgetfulness are equal-opportunity erasers. ♦



Hand of Providence is an inspiring story of how a seed of faith was planted in the life of a young Ronald Reagan by a diligent and caring mother—how that faith blossomed and changed his life, and how, through him, that faith changed America and the entire world.

In the *Hand of Providence*, author Mary Beth Brown explores the life and personality of Ronald Reagan by focusing on his deep-felt beliefs and showing how faith guided him along his distinguished career and led him to his unprecedented success. With the support of President Reagan's own words, his writings, and first-hand interviews of his family, friends, and numerous co-workers, the author weaves a magnificent story of his strong devotion to God that will both inspire and motivate the reader.

In the Foreward to the book, his son, Michael Reagan writes:

> My father is a godly man. He loves God. When he decided to run for president, he didn't do it to raise himself up, to be admired, or to have others think he was great. He didn't do it out of selfish reasons or because it is the most powerful position in the country. He did it out of duty. He believed God had called him to run for president. He believed God had things for him to do.
>
> Even now, with his ever failing health, thre is a certain peace that comes from my father, and knowing one day we will be reunited brings me an even greater peace.

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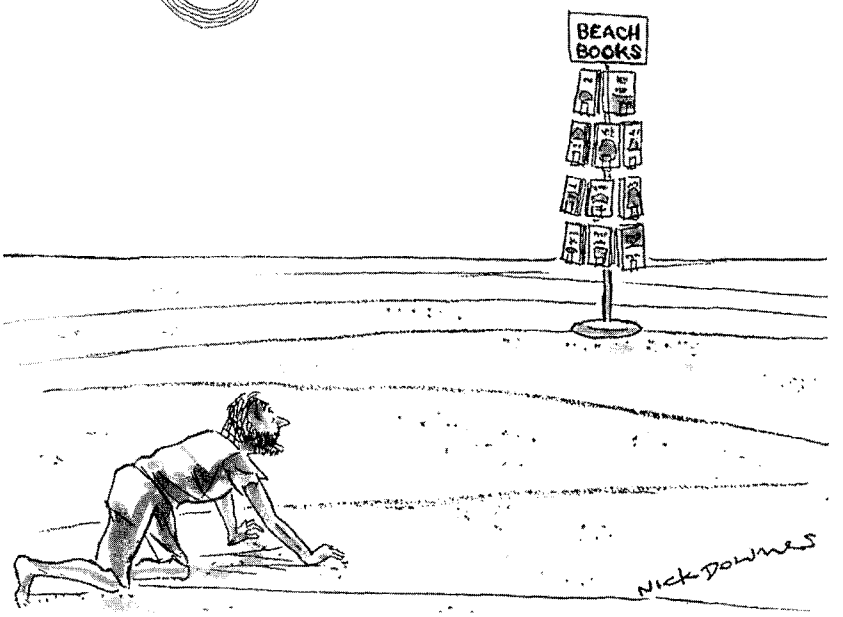

Books in Brief

***Small World: A Microcosmic Journey* by Brad Herzog (Pocket, 394 pp., $13).** Any travel writer worth his salt can churn out a few lines extolling the virtues of New York, London, or Tokyo. It's much harder, however, to produce interesting prose about places where there is apparently nothing to see: Mark Twain, William Least Heat-Moon, John Steinbeck, and, most recently, Brad Herzog have pulled it off. In his new book, *Small World*, freelance writer Herzog spends fifty days crisscrossing the United States to visit small towns that share names with major world metropolises—Prague, Nebraska, for instance, and Bagdad, Arizona.

Although Herzog is a left-leaning Ivy-League-educated Californian, the book's underlying message isn't quite what one would expect from a person with his background. Indeed, *Small World* is an enthusiastic embrace of middle-American places, people, and values. "Disregard for the nation's fly-over spaces," he writes, "has become such a coastal and urban reflex that America has become merely a patchwork quilt of stereotypes and rumors." The real America, Herzog argues, is "defined not by the broad strokes of mainstream media and metropolitan muscle but by the smallest dots on the map."

Herzog, who previously wrote the travel memoir *States of Mind* (briefly a bestseller after he appeared on the television show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* at the height of the program's popularity), spins out this narrative in readable, lyrical, bite-sized chapters. He's occasionally a bit self-indulgent but never boring. Above all he knows how to listen: Even when the people Herzog meets are eccentric (a latrine collector in Amsterdam, Montana) or downright unattractive (a gaggle of unwashed hippies in London, Wisconsin), Herzog still presents them on their own terms.

Many of *Small World*'s best sections read like good newspaper journalism: Herzog provides a fascinating tour of a grain elevator in Vienna, South Dakota, and a look inside a Hare Krishna compound near Calcutta, West Virginia. But he's no romantic: Many of the small towns he finds are dead or dying, and many of the people he meets wouldn't make pleasant dinner companions.

None of this means that the book suffers from a dearth of personal opinion. Along the way, Herzog offers a bevy of interesting observations on everything from billboards to small-town tourism slogans. In the end, it all blends together into an enthusiastic, affectionate, and honest portrait of a slice of America most elites never bother to think about.

—Eli Lehrer

***Essential Cinema: On the Necessity of Film Canons* by Jonathan Rosenbaum (Johns Hopkins University Press, 460 pp., $35).** Jonathan Rosenbaum grew up seeing movies at his grandfather's chain of theaters in Alabama and later made a career of writing about them in the pages of the *Chicago Reader* and other publications. *Essential Cinema* is his attempt to wrestle the filmic canon out of the hands of Hollywood spin doctors, who control assumptions of greatness with large promotional budgets, and give it the academic weight it deserves. That means explaining why certain films and filmmakers are revered as geniuses, while simultaneously exposing the facile nature of the Hollywood publicity machine and the shoddy scholarship of critics who support it.

The book is made up of sixty essays, culled mostly from the *Chicago Reader*, and a list of Rosenbaum's personal canon of a thousand films. Popularity is not a deciding factor for inclusion. Works such as the Russian film *The Asthenic Syndrome* (1989)—which had only one screening in Chicago—get star treatment, while some of the most popular films of all time are ignored altogether.

Nevertheless, even neophytes will find Rosenbaum's mix of scholarship, survey, biography, and critical and visual analysis of the films accessible and interesting. That's about all one can ask from this type of book.

—Gaby Wenig

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Not a Parody

From the *Washington Post*, June 23, 2004

The Rev. Moon Honored at Hill Reception

Lawmakers Say They Were Misled

By Charles Babington *and* Alan Cooperman
Washington Post Staff Writers

More than a dozen lawmakers attended a congressional reception this year honoring the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in which Moon declared himself the Messiah and said his teachings have helped Hitler and Stalin be "reborn as new persons."

At the March 23 ceremony in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.) wore white gloves and carried a pillow holding an ornate crown that was placed on Moon's head. The Korean-born businessman and religious leader then delivered a long speech saying he was "sent to Earth . . . to save the world's six billion people. . . . Emperors, kings and presidents . . . have declared to all Heaven and Earth that Reverend Sun Myung Moon is none other than humanity's Savior, Messiah, Returning Lord and True Parent."

Details of the ceremony—first reported by Salon.com writer John Gorenfeld—have prompted several lawmakers to say they were misled or duped by organizers. Their complaints prompted a Moon-affiliated Web site to remove a video of the "Crown of Peace" ceremony two days ago, but other Web sites have preserved details and photos.

Moon, 85, has been controversial for years. Renowned for officiating at mass

See MOON, *A6, Col. 1*

the weekly Standard

July 5 / July 12, 2004

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon speaks at the Senate's Dirksen Buil in a "Crown of Peace" ceremony. Several lawmakers attended

Lawmakers Atten

MOON, *From A1*

weddings, he received an 18-month prison sentence in 1982 for tax fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice. In a 1997 sermon, he likened homosexuals to "dirty dung-eating dogs."

Among the more than 300 people who attended all or part of the March ceremony was Sen. Mark Dayton (D-Minn.), who now says he simply was honoring a constituent receiving a peace award and did not know Moon would be there. "We fell victim to it; we were duped," Dayton spokeswoman Chris Lisi said yesterday.

Other lawmakers who attended or were listed as hosts felt the same, she said. "Everyone I talked to was furious," she said. With Minnesotans demanding to know whether Dayton is a follower of Moon, Lisi said, the senator persuaded the St. Paul Pioneer Press to write an article allowing him to reply.

The event's organizers flew in nearly 100 honorees from all 50 states to receive state and national peace awards. The only "international crown of peace awards" went to Moon and his wife.

Some Republicans who attended the event, including Rep. Roscoe G. Bartlett (Md.), said they did so mainly to salute the Washington Times, a conservative-leaning newspaper owned by Moon's organization. "I had no idea what would hap-

pen" regarding Mo
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Price Controls on Gasoline? Bad Idea

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Americans are understandably upset by the high prices they've been paying for gasoline. Many think that the cause is oil company greed and that the solution is government-enforced price controls. But price controls on gasoline are a terrible idea. They would cause shortages and lineups and would hurt producers and consumers.

Here's why. What determines the price of gasoline is the amount producers are willing to supply at various prices and the amount drivers demand at various prices. At the current price of gasoline, say $2.00, the amount drivers want to buy roughly equals the amount producers want to sell. That's why there are no gas lines. Such a "market-clearing price" evolves in every competitive market.

What happens, then, when the government decrees that the price of gasoline be no higher than, say, $1.80. The obvious answer is that consumers now can get their gas for 20 cents a gallon less. But that answer is incomplete.

At a price of $1.80, consumers will want more than they wanted at $2.00. One of the things economists are surest of is that we want more of a good when its price falls. At that lower price, producers want to supply less. The necessary result, therefore, is a shortage: the amount demanded exceeds the amount supplied.

Shortages lead to lineups. Consumers then compete with one another, not just by paying money but by spending time in line. Economists call this lost time a "deadweight loss," a loss to some that is a gain to none.

During the 1979 gasoline shortage, I calculated that the 80-cent-per-gallon price control caused consumers to spend about $1.10 a gallon (30 cents per gallon in lost time) and that if the price controls had been removed, the market-clearing price of gasoline would have been $1.00. Consumers actually paid more than they would have without price controls, and producers made 20 cents less. Both lost.

Many people are convinced that high gasoline prices are due to oil companies' greed. But that explanation is insufficient. Why such sudden greed? Weren't oil companies greedy a year ago, when prices were lower? To explain a change in something, you need to point to something that changed.

What changed is the world price of oil, which increased by about $14 between May 2003 and May 2004. Each dollar increase in the price of oil translates into roughly a 2.5-cent increase in gasoline prices. About 35 cents of the 50-cent-per-gallon increase in the price of gasoline, therefore, is due to world market conditions, one of which is the reduced oil production in Iraq.

Also, federal regulations fragment what was once a national gasoline market. The Environmental Protection Agency decrees that certain kinds of gasoline be used in certain regions. When a refinery or pipeline goes down in certain markets, such as California, gasoline sellers can't legally buy from other markets. The result: wild swings in gasoline prices. The regulations also make gasoline more expensive.

Price controls are a bad idea. Here's a better one: reduce gasoline taxes.

—David R. Henderson

David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an economics professor at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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